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Role Reversal

A lot has changed in the three-plus months since the Big 12's preseason poll



Brian Hill

AFTER MISSOURI was picked to win the Big 12 North in a preseason media poll, one of our columnists wrote about whether or not Nebraska players were offended by being picked second.

After all, the Huskers had gone 5-0 against their North counterparts on their way to a berth in the 2006 Big 12 championship game. Of Nebraska's five losses, four came to teams ranked in the top 10, including a 17-14 loss to Auburn in the Cotton Bowl.

The Husker players interviewed reacted with quiet confidence in their responses to the preseason poll at the Big 12's media days in July in San Antonio.

Just more than three months later, it looks like Kansas should have been the team that felt slighted. The Jayhawks, coming off a 6-6 season, were picked fourth in the North in the preseason, behind Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas State, and just a few points ahead of fifth-place Colorado.

On the first Saturday in November, KU sits atop the Big 12 North at 5-0, is rolling along at 9-0 overall and was ranked No. 8 last week.

The role reversal came to a head as the Jayhawks scored touchdowns on 10 straight possessions to overwhelm Nebraska 76-39 on an otherwise pleasant Saturday in Lawrence, Kan.

Alex Henery's field goal just before halftime gave the Huskers 24 first-half

points — a nice offensive output. The problem was they had already allowed 48.

You can read more about Nebraska's solid offensive performance in this edition of *Huskers Illustrated*. Henery, the redshirt freshman place-kicker who is now 7-for-7 on field goals, is the subject of this week's feature story, and freshman safety Eric Hagg answers "10 Questions."

There's plenty more, including a look at senior center Aleks Maric and the Husker basketball team, which defeated

Division III Nebraska Wesleyan 70-50 in its first exhibition game, the night before almost as many total points were scored at KU's Memorial Stadium.

The Huskers, coming off three solid quarters in a 28-25 loss a week earlier at Texas, got off to a promising start. Kansas went three-and-out, freshman Prince Amukamara partially blocked a punt, and NU went 46 yards in 10 plays, capped by a 3-yard

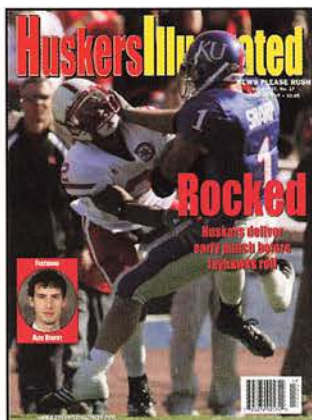
touchdown run by junior quarterback Joe Ganz, making his first start following a season-ending injury to Sam Keller.

After the Jayhawks quickly tied the game, Nebraska responded to regain the lead when Ganz hooked up with Marlon Lucky on a 62-yard scoring pass.

But the Huskers couldn't keep up as KU began to score at will against the beleaguered Husker defense. The damages included the most points ever scored against Nebraska and a fifth straight loss for the first time since 1958.

Just two chances remain to stop the bleeding. Kansas State comes to town for the final home game for NU's senior class (photo on Page 26) before the trip to Colorado Nov. 23. K-State is reeling as well, after a 31-20 loss at Iowa State. The Cyclones' first Big 12 win puts them in a fifth-place tie with the Huskers.

No one could have predicted they'd be playing to stay out of the cellar. ■



ON THE COVER

Nebraska cornerback Cortney Grixby collides with Kansas tailback Jake Sharp. Grixby finished with six tackles, and Sharp scored two touchdowns in KU's 76-39 victory at Memorial Stadium in Lawrence, Kan. Cover photo by Scott Bruhn.

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Huskers Illustrated

CONTENTS

NOV. 10, 2007 • VOLUME 27, NO. 17



8

8 FEATURING ALEX HENERY

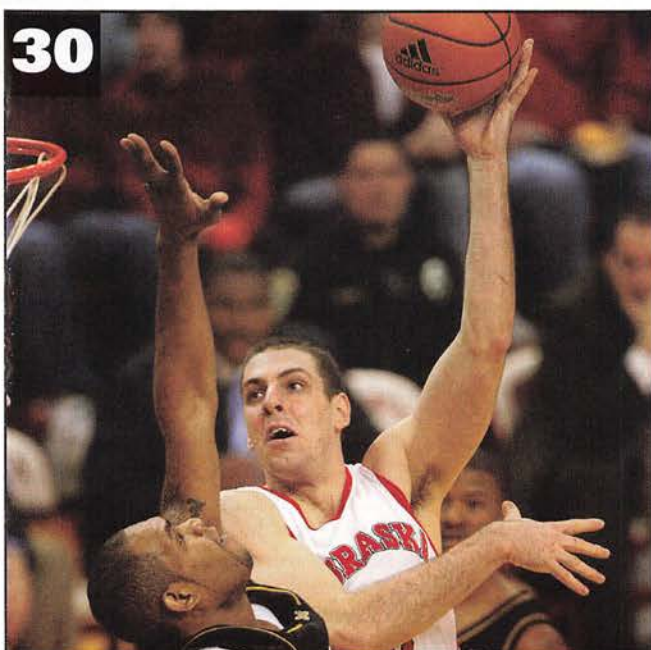
Jordan Congdon's surprise departure provided Alex Henery an opportunity in the spring of his freshman year. And he capitalized, knowing that he would have to earn the job again in the fall, when Adi Kunalic arrived.
By Mike Babcock

NEXT ISSUE

The Kansas State review/Colorado preview edition will be mailed on Nov. 12. Check for updates at huskersillustrated.com.

DEPARTMENTS

Letter From The Editor	4
State Of The Huskers	6
<i>What was expected to be, at the very least, another step forward for the Cornhusker program has taken a surprising turn.</i>	
From The Beat	7
<i>If you really want the reason behind Kansas State's rise, look to the guys playing on special teams and defense.</i>	
10 Questions	12
<i>When Eric Hagg arrived, he figured he would spend the season getting faster and stronger and learning the playbook.</i>	
Chasing The Jet/Lists	13
Recruiting	14
<i>Despite the recruiting setbacks, the Huskers still ranked 11th in Rivals' team recruiting rankings heading into November.</i>	
Kansas Game Recap	17
Scouting Report	23
Volleyball	28
<i>Freshman Tara Mueller may have all the tools, but there is still that period of adjustment to the college game.</i>	
Basketball	30
<i>Attention is unavoidable and not just because Aleks Maric is 6-foot-11 and 275 pounds, with an Australian accent.</i>	
Other Sports-Rifle	32
<i>Kirsten Weiss has enjoyed shooting since she started, but she said her choice to continue it in college was a difficult one.</i>	
Notebook	34
<i>Sam Keller was the consummate teammate.</i>	
Crossword Puzzle/Huskernutz	36
10 Years Ago	37
Final Word	38



30

Didn't See It Coming

'I think if you told any of us that this would be the situation about eight weeks ago, we wouldn't have believed you'



Terry DOUGLASS

BACK IN THE HEAT and preseason bliss of August, the Nebraska football team would come together as a unit and close practices by shouting its ultimate goal.

"National championship!" the Cornhuskers yelled in unison, revealing that the internal expectations for this year's Nebraska team were far loftier than even those held by many fans and any of the pundits.

But as the 2007 season nears a close, the vast majority of the Huskers' preseason goals have long since been dashed. Now, even finishing with a .500 record and getting to a bowl game appears to be a tall order.

While most would probably agree that capturing a national title was an overly ambitious goal, no one on the team saw this coming. What was expected to be, at the very least, another step forward for the Cornhusker program under fourth-year coach Bill Callahan has taken a surprising turn.

"I think if you told any of us that this would be the situation about eight weeks ago, we wouldn't have believed you," junior wide receiver Todd Peterson said. "It has been a bit of a shock. We just had extremely high goals for ourselves, and we're just not performing right now."

The Husker defense has played so poorly that the players have been stripped of their traditional Blackshirt practice jerseys. Entering Saturday's home finale against Kansas State, Nebraska has already lost three games at Memorial Stadium for the first time in a season since 1968.

How quickly have things gone south in Lincoln? Athletic director Steve Pederson was fired on Oct. 15 and replaced on an interim basis by former Nebraska coaching great Tom Osborne, less than three months after receiving a contract extension. While chancellor Harvey Perlman said the decision to move in a different direction wasn't merely because of the football team's struggles, Callahan's future is now also in question two months after receiving a contract extension through the 2011 season.

"It's frustrating," Peterson said. "Everybody's doing everything that they can to keep a positive outlook and stay together, but it's tough when you don't win games."

"This business is about winning. It's college, but it is business at the same time because there's a lot of money involved, and people who are feeling pressure."

The legendary support Nebraska fans have shown for their team also appears to be showing a few cracks. While the nation's longest home sellout streak is safe through this season at Memorial Stadium, a few players have voiced frustration with the perceived lack of support during these difficult times.

"Obviously, we hear all the stuff that the fans are saying," junior defensive end Zach Potter said. "We read the papers. We go to class, and we hear what students are staying and

stuff, so it's tough for us to be out there and really hear what they have to say."

Senior safety Ben Eisenhart said that the weekly routine during a losing streak is almost maddening. Each week, Eisenhart said the Huskers keep clinging to the belief that things are going to turn around, only to too often feel the sting of defeat once again.

"Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, you're still just sick about it," Eisenhart said. "Wednesday, you realize you've got another game, and you've got to get ready to play, so it starts to fade, and then you get your hopes up, and you've got a game Saturday, and then it happens again."

"It's a cycle that's really wearing on us, but you've just got to keep going. You've got to keep pushing. You can't ever give up."

With media types and fans piling on the criticism, the players have come to the realization that all they have is each other.

Despite the lack of success, Peterson said the Huskers have managed to keep finger-pointing to a minimum.

"If we fall apart now, there's no hope for us," Peterson said. "That's the one thing that we've got to do is we've got to stay positive. We've got to stay together."

"Football is the quintessential team sport. You need everybody working together to get it done."

Senior wide receiver Maurice Purify said that as a competitor, he absolutely has to believe that the Huskers are going to somehow find a way to win every time they play, even if they're regarded as heavy underdogs.

"Nobody wants to go out there and lose," Purify said. "As hard as it is for the fans to think that we just (stink), we're not trying to lose. We practice hard, we practiced hard in the offseason,

and we put a lot of work into it."

"We're going out on the field and trying our hardest."

Sometimes, maybe too hard, Peterson said. As Nebraska's struggles have mounted, several players have noted that they are pressing and trying to do too much on every play.

"I think it has been somewhat of a chain reaction," Peterson said. "The defense was struggling early, and on offense, we come out and we want to do everything we can for the defense."

"We want to hold on to the ball, and we want to score every time, and I think it has gotten to the point where we're pressing too hard and thinking about it too much."

If nothing else, Peterson said this season has taught him and his teammates a lesson in character and perseverance.

"Obviously, adversity doesn't build character, it reveals it," Peterson said. "Each week, we've got to keep coming out and show what we're really made of." ■



Todd Peterson says NU had extremely high goals.

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the Grand Island (Neb.) Independent. He can be reached at terry.douglass@msn.com.

More Than Offense

*Defense, special teams making key contributions
for Kansas State this season*



**Curt
McKEEVER**

AS COULD BE EXPECTED, Josh Freeman is a little more confident and productive in his second season leading Kansas State's offense.

The Wildcats also are getting a career year from senior wide receiver Jordy Nelson.

But if you really want the reason behind their rise in the Big 12 North Division under second-year coach Ron Prince, look to the guys playing on special teams and defense.

During its Sept. 29 game at Texas, K-State managed just 272 yards of offense. But it would end up handing the Longhorns a 41-21 loss — their worst in Mack Brown's 10 seasons — thanks to touchdowns on an interception, a kickoff return and a punt return.

It marked the 15th time since 1990 that the Wildcats had scored both defensive and special-teams TDs in one game. Not surprisingly, they won all 15 of those contests.

"We really wanted to try to build the team on special teams and defense," said Prince, whose team took a 5-3 record to Iowa State the week before it was to play Nebraska. "We knew we were going to have to play some great defense to be able to deal with all the great offenses in this league. . . . All those things did not go exactly our way (against Texas), but when we got the special-teams plays, it dramatically changed the game."

James Johnson returned a kickoff 85 yards after Texas had tied the game 14-14. And later, Nelson sealed the outcome with an 89-yard punt return.

Entering its Nov. 4 game at Iowa State, K-State ranked No. 1 nationally in punt returns and No. 7 in net punting.

The defense, led by junior end Ian Campbell, a first-team all-league player last season, ranked 11th nationally in sacks and No. 5 in the Big 12 in yards allowed.

Prince hedged at the suggestion that his team's second straight win against Texas represented the finest moment of his brief K-State career. But his stance wasn't really fooling anyone.

Short of winning in Norman, Okla., there isn't a bigger statement a Big 12 team could make than to leave Austin having hooked the Longhorns.

The Wildcats' win there gave a more accurate gauge about their overall standing in the league than did their record after eight games. The losses were to Kansas by six points, to Oklahoma State on a last-second field goal and a season opener at Auburn that they led with just over two minutes remaining.

"I think we are getting into rhythm," Nelson said after fueling a 51-13 win against Baylor on Oct. 27. "We are figuring everything out."

"The coaches are maybe getting more comfortable with the plays that we are going to be good at, and we just have to continue. Last year we got in this groove, and then we kind of fell off at the end, so we just need to keep it going."

In 2006, Kansas State split its first eight games, then went on

a three-game winning streak before falling to the Jayhawks and to Rutgers in the Texas Bowl.

Prince, who was born in Omaha and then, after being adopted, raised in Junction City, Kan., became just the second K-State coach to win seven games during his inaugural season. He also was the first to take his initial team to a bowl.

Although he took nothing for granted, Prince had to have known that having Freeman and Nelson back would help the Wildcats continue their progress.

Freeman, the lone true freshman quarterback to lead his team to a bowl game last season, passed for a K-State freshman record 1,780 yards. He also went through expected growing pains and threw 15 interceptions, with just six touchdowns.

In the second half of a 17-3 loss to Baylor, which was when Prince decided to change quarterbacks, Freeman showed his inexperience by tossing three interceptions.

One year later, Freeman threw for three scores and ran for two more to ignite a 51-13 rout of the Bears. Freeman's effort left him with 2,174 passing yards for the season, making him the first Wildcat since Ell Roberson in 2003 to go over 2,000 yards.

"It's our second year in the system, and I think the second year for anything is always a better year," said Freeman, who'd thrown for six of his 11 touchdowns in his most recent two games. "More people know what Coach expects. We know the offense better, and we are able to actually run it now instead of kind of blindly playing."

Having Nelson at full strength has made a big difference for Freeman. Hampered by injury throughout 2006, the former walk-on defensive back, was unable to match the numbers that led to him being named second-team All-Big 12 in 2005.

In 2007, Nelson's looked like an All-American. Through eight games, he was No. 2 nationally in receptions per game (9.5) and yards per game (126).

"I don't know if any other player means more to his team than he does to ours," Prince said. ". . . If you look at our team, we know it, you know it, and the opponent knows it. We're trying to get it to him, and he still gets it, and he still does something with it."

Nelson is one of 12 semifinalists for the Biletnikoff Award, given annually to the nation's top collegiate wide receiver.

His contribution has come within a spread attack that is a classic example of how teams are trying to one-up defenses.

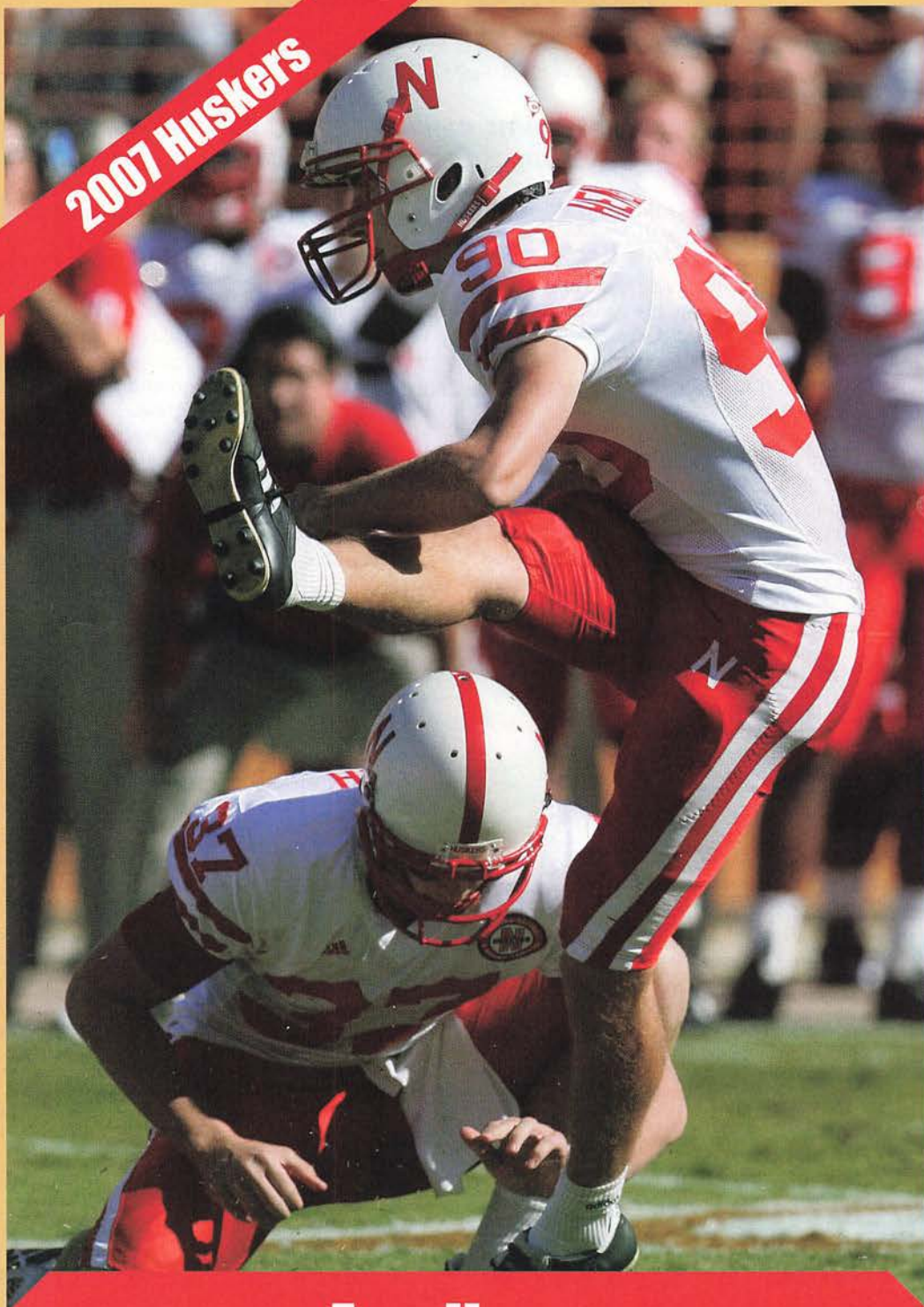
"Everybody's getting the ball to their best players in space, and what's happening is defenders are having to beat a block and then try to go tackle a very talented player out in space," Prince said. "The days of having a small chute where you're running an isolation play on a linebacker, or you're running some of these kind of plays where it's kind of football in a phone booth, are over." ■



**Ron Prince is in his
second season as head
coach at Kansas State.**

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football, he is the primary beat writer for baseball. Curt can be reached at cmckeever@journalstar.com

2007 Huskers



ALEX HENERY
Place-Kicker

'It Was Just Instinct; I Used My Soccer Skills'

By **MIKE BABCOCK** ● Photos: **SCOTT BRUHN**

How's this for a start to your kicking career? Alex Henery was a sophomore at Omaha Burke High School when he kicked for the first time in a football game. He had been on the varsity as a freshman, suiting up for games. But Burke had a senior who handled place-kicks and punts. So Henery watched and waited for his opportunity.

The first came in the season-opener the next year. As Henery remembers, the game was against Lincoln Northeast High School, and it was played at Seacrest Field in Lincoln.

He was called on to punt. But the punt was blocked. Later in the game, on another punt, the center snap was off-target to his left, and the only way he could avoid another block was to kick the ball left-footed. "It was just instinct," Henery said. "I used my soccer skills."

His debut was less than auspicious, but "I liked it," he said. "I think."

That's obvious now. Henery, a redshirted freshman walk-on, has done most of the Cornhuskers' place-kicking this season, handling extra-point kicks and making six-of-six field goal attempts through the first nine games, while true freshman Adi Kunalic has handled kickoffs.

Kunalic also was successful on his only field goal attempt in those first nine games, a 47-yarder in the opener against Nevada. Though there's no set distance beyond which Kunalic gets the call, "if there are desperation ones, like longer ones, I think he may go in," said Henery.

But "it's not like I don't have the distance," he said. He has hit from 57 yards in practice.

"It depends on the day and how the wind's going," Henery said.

There's no question about Kunalic's leg strength. He drove 22 of his first 43 kickoffs into the end zone this season. By comparison, only 12 Nebraska kickoffs went for touchbacks last season, when kickoffs came from the 35-

yard line instead of the 30, as they do now.

Sending kickoffs into the end zone helps in starting field position. "I know it's definitely better if we can get them on the 20," said Kunalic. "I think it's helped out a lot with our cover teams."

☆☆☆

Prior to the season, most Cornhusker fans figured Kunalic would be doing all of the place-kicking. He was recruited on scholarship from North Crowley High School in Fort Worth, Texas, to fill a perceived void left when sophomore Jordan Congdon transferred to Southern California.

Congdon was a member of Nebraska's much-publicized 2005 recruiting class.

He was a Parade All-American at St. Augustine High in San Diego, after leading his section in kick-scoring for three consecutive seasons. Rivals.com rated him the No. 1 prep kicker in the country.

He was as good as expected, setting a school record by kicking 19 field goals in 23 attempts, including four-of-four in the opening game against Maine. He missed the first extra-point kick of his college career, then made 31 in a row. And he earned freshman All-America recognition.

His field goal percentage (.826) was tops among the nation's freshmen.

Even though it appeared the place-kicking was set for the next three seasons, Henery decided to walk on with the Cornhuskers. "I kind of figured they would rely on him," Henery said.

"I thought I could push him at least, if not try to win the spot."

Winning the job seemed a longshot, but if he could push Congdon, make him better, things might work out and "I would get to kick, somehow," said the soft-spoken Henery.

Besides, he came to Nebraska figuring his best opportunity would be as a punter.

In fact, Henery earned more acclaim in high school as a punter. He was first-team all-state as a senior, averaging 41.4 yards, and first-team Class A as a junior, averaging

FEATURING
**ALEX
HENERY**

"I don't like to be not good at something. So I push myself to the point where I can do it really well."

— Alex Henery

41.7. He also was the field goal kicker, but the team was good enough offensively that he didn't get many chances.

Dan Titchener, a sophomore who also came to Nebraska as a walk-on, emerged as the punter in the fall of Henery's freshman year, however. And when the coaches suggested he focus on place-kicking, he agreed. Congdon didn't have a "solid back-up," said Henery.

"So I just thought I would get in the mix and see what I could do there, instead of sitting at third-string (as a punter). I thought I would try to get to second (team) at something."

Jake Wesch, another sophomore, filled that role, even taking over kick-offs from Congdon for the most part in the second half of the season, while Henery redshirted.

Even so, he was the No. 1 "on-side guy," he said. Had the Cornhuskers needed an on-sides kick, he would have handled it, at least up to a certain point in the season. The coaches wouldn't have asked him to give up a redshirt just for an on-sides kick with a couple of games remaining.

If they had asked him to kick in the final regular-season game against Colorado, though, he would have done so without hesitation. "You never know if you'll get on the field after that," he said.

☆☆☆

Henery learned of Congdon's decision to leave Nebraska in a newspaper account. He was surprised. Despite the story, "I didn't know if it was true or not," he said. He and Congdon were friends as well as teammates. But because he was a freshman redshirt, the two hadn't

been that close.

Personal reasons were the official reason for Congdon's departure. He wanted to be closer to home. But his sophomore season was a disappointment compared to what he had done as a freshman. He was 55-of-56 on extra-point kicks, but he attempted only seven field goals, making five.

The longest attempt was from 42 yards. The longest made was a 40-yarder against Missouri. He also kicked a 33-yarder against the Tigers.

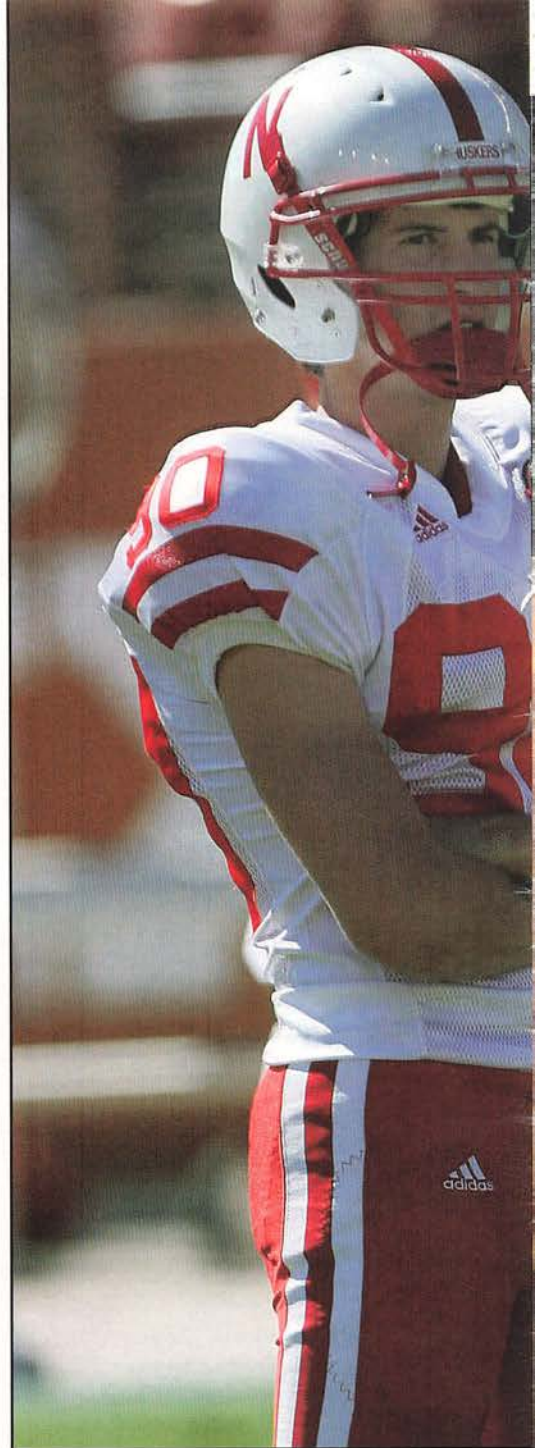
That would be his last of the season, even though he might have had a shot at tying the score late in the Cotton Bowl game against Auburn.

Whatever the reason for Congdon's surprise departure, it provided Henery an opportunity in the spring of his freshman year. And he capitalized, knowing that he would have to earn the job again in the fall, when Kunalic arrived. The coaches "just want someone to step up" in the spring, said Henery, who finished the spring with five-of-five extra-point kicks and a 36-yard field goal in the Red-White game.

☆☆☆

If not for a junior high gym teacher, Henery probably would be playing soccer at Creighton now. He grew up playing soccer, from the age of "4 or 5." He began playing for a select club team at age 11 and played soccer throughout high school. He was a forward, and he broke the Burke High career record for goals scored. He was the only junior on the Omaha World-Herald's All-Nebraska first team in 2005, leading the Burke Bulldogs to the Class A playoffs.

Burke High also advanced to the state playoffs when he was a fresh-



man. But his sophomore season came to an end during the first match, when he suffered a broken collarbone.

"A bigger guy hit me, and I kind of went down," he said.

In any case, soccer was clearly his sport. He never punted or kicked a football until the gym teacher suggested he give it a try as a freshman. The soccer coach was also the kickers coach for the football team. "So I kind of knew him already," Henery said. "I never really thought about it (football)."

He might have without someone pushing him. But the point is moot now.



Though Alex Henery (90) and Adi Kunalic (20) are competing for the same job, they're "good buds," Henery said.

Even though he made the varsity football team as a freshman, he didn't give up club soccer, which was active just about year around. After football practice, he would go to soccer practice. His club team was extremely successful, winning the state title every year he played except one.

Creighton offered a soccer scholarship, complicating his decision to walk on for football at Nebraska. "It was pretty tough, that month or two there," he said. "I didn't really want to stay in Omaha." But he would have to pass up a scholarship in order

to leave home and be on his own.

Academics were a factor, too, in Nebraska's favor. His initial plan was to earn a degree in civil engineering. He has since changed his major to construction management.

☆☆☆

Kunalic also has a soccer background. He was born in Bosnia, but his family moved to Germany, when he was "1 or 2," to get away from the civil war there. As with many youngsters in Europe, he grew up playing soccer. When he was 11-years-old, his family moved to Fort Worth.

He continued to play soccer. When he got to the United States, "I thought football was stupid; I'll be honest," Kunalic said. "I didn't understand it. I was all into soccer."

When he was a sophomore in high school, a coach suggested he try kicking a football. He really didn't need much persuading. He looked at the matter practically. "Should I be on the field for 2 minutes? Or should I run around the field for 90 minutes? I found the easy way out," he said.

The football season had already begun. So he got some football shoes and just started kicking. The coach liked what he saw, and "I got the job like two days later," said Kunalic.

"I've been kicking varsity since. It's been good, man."

During his junior season, he kicked a 57-yard field goal. But he is comfortable from farther away, 60 to 65 yards. "That's as far as I want to go back," he said during training camp.

Though he and Kunalic are competing for the same job, they're "good buds," Henery said.

They don't hang out together off the field, but they room together on road trips, and they push each to get better every day in practice. "We help each other out a lot," he said.

Apparently, Henery hasn't needed much help of late. "He never has a bad day kicking, so that's good," Kunalic said. "He got the job before the season started, and he's been doing super, and I believe in him. The way I see it, it's for the better of the team because I'd rather have the team win than me being the starting kicker. He's doing the best job right now, so I'll back him up on that."

And if he were the starter, he's "pretty sure" Henery would do the same for him.

They'll be joined by another kicker in the spring, Daniel Lee, who will have one season of eligibility remaining after redshirting following his transfer from Vanderbilt.

The more competition the merrier, though Henery does a good job of self-motivation. He picked up kicking quickly, even though kicking a soccer ball is different from punting and place-kicking.

"I don't like to be not good at something," he said. "So I push myself to the point where I can do it really well." ■

10 QUESTIONS

with **ERIC HAGG**

**Freshman Safety
Peoria, Ariz.**

When Eric Hagg arrived at Nebraska, he wanted to redshirt. He figured he would spend the season getting faster and stronger and learning the playbook. Then he would compete at safety in the spring.

Three games into the season, however, he changed his mind. When safeties coach Bill Busch told him he could play on special teams, kickoff and punt return, he agreed.

By doing that he could get a "feel of the game" and be better prepared come spring. "I was like, 'I've got to get used to the speed of the game, so I might as well go in,'" said Hagg.

He was among five players from Arizona in Nebraska's 2007 recruiting class. He and defensive end Will Yancy, who is redshirting, were teammates at Ironwood High. And he knew the others, all of whom are from the Phoenix area: Prince Amukamara, Jaivorio Burkes and Marcel Jones.

Burkes lived "right down the street," and Hagg competed against Amukamara. "If he would have been in our division, he wouldn't have been as good. He was in a lower division," Hagg said.

He laughed. Just kidding. Amukamara, with whom he roomed during the summer, was the Arizona Republic's high school player of the year.

Hagg has vivid memories of training camp. "It was horrible. That was the worst thing I ever did," he said. "But this was the hardest year, I guess. It seemed like it took forever."

Since then, time has flown by. "I remember the first game like it was yesterday," said Hagg. "Even though I wasn't playing, I was nervous."

If you had only three things on your iPod, what would they be?

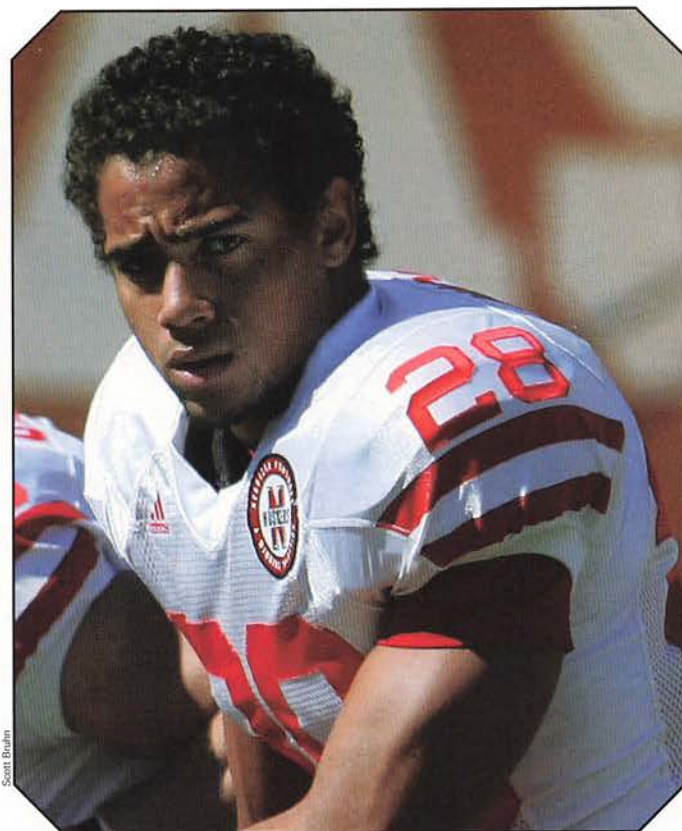
"I don't really need an iPod. I would just need a phone. I listen to music because I get bored. I don't like to rap or anything. I listen to Goo Goo Dolls and stuff. They (teammates) make fun of me. But it's OK. I've got Bone Thugs 'n Harmony, Chris Brown, stuff like that, alternative rock."

If you could eat only one thing for a month, what would it be?

"Wings, hot wings, and ice cream. I wouldn't eat them together, but that's what I would eat. I eat ice cream with milk, just vanilla. Chocolate's gross. I dump milk in there. I can't eat the spicy wings. Jaivorio (Burkes) played a trick on me. He said, 'These are good.' My mouth was burning so bad. I was about to hit him, but he's big."

If you could play for any NFL team, what team would it be?

"The Packers, they're my favorite team. My dad is from Wisconsin, so he got me liking them. I've liked them forever. I like Brett Favre. When Dorsey Levens played, I liked him, too."



What's the best thing served at the training table?

"They have steak and that's pretty good, but they have this yogurt thing, and that's pretty good, too. I don't know what they call it. It has granola with yogurt and strawberries, blueberries, a yogurt parfait thing."

If your life were made into a movie, whom would you pick to play your character?

"Will Smith, because my favorite movie is 'Hitch,' besides 'Gladiator.' It's funny. 'Gladiator' is just a good movie. Watching movies is the only thing to do here. But that's all right."

Sky diving, bungee jumping or rock climbing?

"I'd do all those. I did rock climbing, not real rock climbing but the one in the rec center. You're supposed to use your legs, but I used my upper body. It didn't work out. I got to the top, but I was dead."

If you could excel at a sport besides football at the collegiate level, what would it be?

"Basketball, probably, or lacrosse; that looks like fun. Or soccer. If I could go back, I would play soccer. I got into soccer a lot, but I'm not good at it. I didn't play it when I was little, at all. I played basketball, and that was it. I didn't even like football at first."

If you could spend 30 minutes with a celebrity, who would it be and what would you ask?

"I would want to see Chad Johnson, just because he's funny. He brings fire to the game. He makes the NFL good. The dance stuff, I'd ask him what made him think of that, what kept him going. An actor, I'd probably want to meet Will Smith."

Who's the toughest guy on the team?

"I don't know that, but the person who works the hardest, I think, is (Anthony) Blue. He works really hard. I'm talking about the people I know. Everybody works hard, but Blue works extra hard. I don't know if he's the toughest. I don't know who the toughest is."

If somebody asked you to recommend a good book to read, what would you tell them?

"'Holes' or 'The Chronicles of Narnia.' I didn't finish 'The Chronicles of Narnia,' but 'Holes' was good. I read it like two years ago, three years ago." ■

TOP 10

SINGLE-SEASON PASSING

[Though he played in only nine games, Sam Keller finishes with the third-highest, single-season, passing-yardage total in Cornhusker history. Keller pushed Eric Crouch out of the top 10 in the Missouri game.]

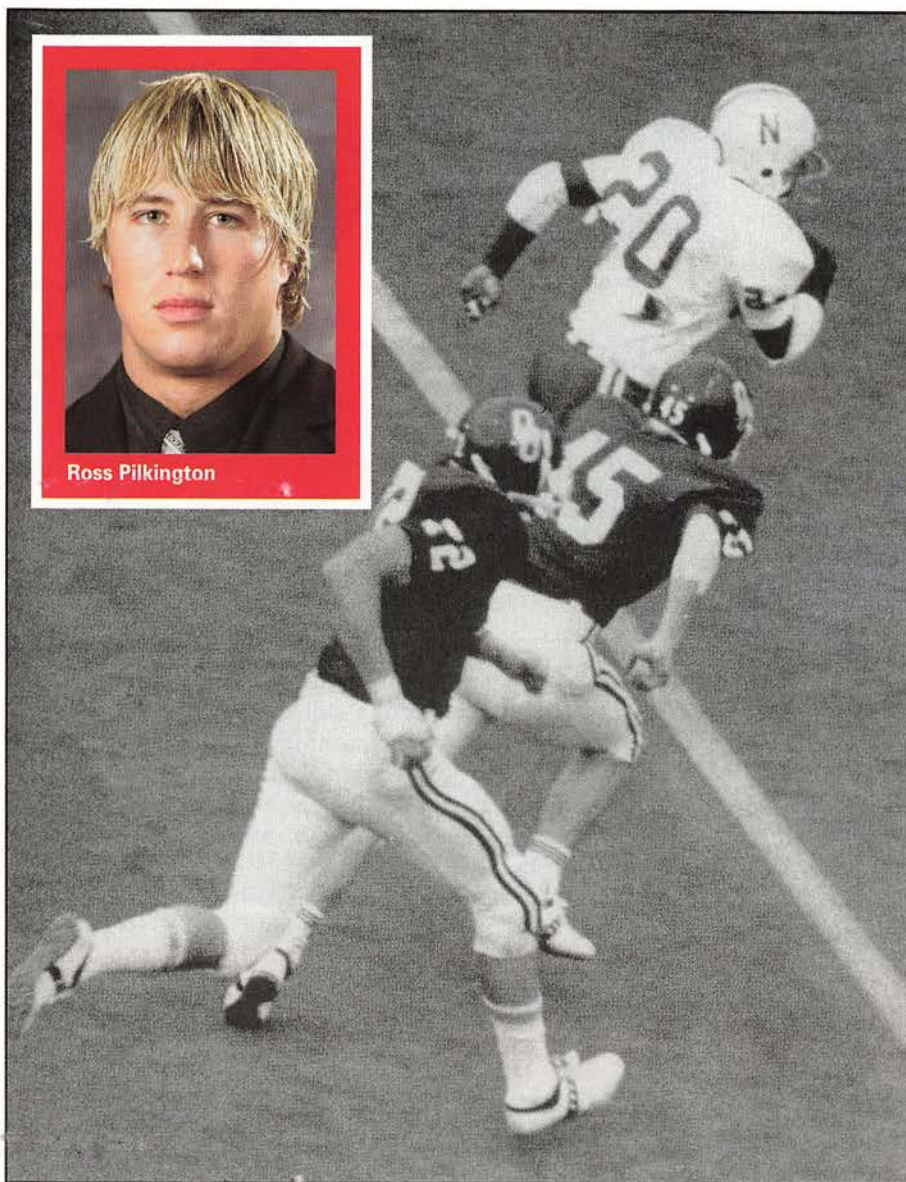
Player (Year)	Yards
Zac Taylor (2006)	3,197
Zac Taylor (2005)	2,653
Sam Keller (2007)	2,422
Dave Humm (1972)	2,074
Vince Ferragamo (1976)	2,071
Joe Dailey (2004)	2,025
Jerry Tagge (1971)	2,019
Tom Sorley (1978)	1,571
Dave Humm (1973)	1,526
Turner Gill (1983)	1,516

TOP 10

SINGLE-GAME PASSING

[Only Dave Humm remains from the pre-Bill Callahan era.]

Player, Opponent (Year)	Yards
Sam Keller, Ball State (2007)	438
Zac Taylor, Iowa St. (2005), 2OT	431
Zac Taylor, Kansas (2006), OT	395
Zac Taylor, Colorado (2005)	392
Sam Keller, USC (2007)	389
Joe Dailey, Baylor (2004)	342
Joe Dailey, Colorado (2004)	306
Sam Keller, Texas (2007)	298
Dave Humm, Wisconsin (1973)	297
Dave Humm, Missouri (1973)	292



Ross Pilkington

(Johnny Rodgers' career-receiving records, once seemingly unbreakable, are likely to fall in the not-too-distant future, under an assault facilitated by coach Bill Callahan's West Coast offense. This season, Huskers Illustrated takes a look at the all-time best receivers, as senior Terrence Nunn continues to climb on the all-time receptions list, topped by Rodgers.)

ROSS PILKINGTON (2002-2004) No. 2 6-0, 185 Fort Collins, Colo.

Pilkington was the first wide receiver to benefit from coach Bill Callahan's West Coast offense, leading the team in receptions (27) and receiving yards (337) in Callahan's first season. He originally signed a letter of intent with Nebraska in February of 2000 but signed with the Colorado Rockies as a 20th-round draft pick and played two seasons in the Rockies organization. He was a high school teammate of former Cornhusker I-back Josh Davis, and his father, Greg, played on the Nebraska freshman football team in 1971. He played in every game as a true freshman, catching a school freshman-record 14 passes for 301 yards, to tie for the school freshman record. Tight end Matt Herian also had 301 receiving yards in 2002. Pilkington's only touchdown as a freshman came on a 90-yard pass play against Iowa State, the third-longest in school history and the longest since 1965. He started every game as a sophomore and tied Herian for the team lead with 22 catches for a team-high 338 yards and one touchdown. He was elected as a co-captain on Callahan's first team but didn't return for his senior season. He finished his career at No. 10 on the Cornhuskers' all-time receptions list, with 63 for 976 yards and four touchdowns. ■

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North Leader

Despite the setbacks, NU still has top rank in North

By Rick Shaw

The month of October proved to be a tough one both on and off the field for the Nebraska football team. Not only did the Huskers go winless during that time



Baker Steinkuhler



Simi Kuli

period, but they also saw four highly regarded recruits back out of their commitments.

Highly touted running back prospect Jonas Gray reneged on his pledge to the Huskers in mid-month and, soon after, committed to Notre

Dame. Quarterback Blaine Gabbert, rated a five-star prospect by Rivals.com, reopened his recruitment in mid-month as did wide receiver D.J. Woods (three stars) and defensive tackle Darius Parish (three stars).

All four players cited the uncertainty of the Husker coaching staff, in the midst of a disappointing year on the field, as a principle reason for their de-commitments.

Despite the recruiting setbacks, the Huskers still ranked 11th in Rivals' team recruiting rankings heading into November. That stood as the third best rating in the Big 12 Conference and the top mark in the North Division.

The Huskers commit list is current-

NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2008

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	Hometown (School)
Will Compton	LB	6-2	214	4.5	Bonne Terre, Mo. (North County)
Sean Fisher	LB	6-5	210	4.6	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
Bryce Givens	OL	6-6	257	5.1	Denver, Colo. (J.K. Mullen)
Eric Harper	DE	6-4	220	4.62	Marrero La. (John Ehret)
Ricky Henry	OL	6-4	300	5.2	Omaha, Neb. (Burke/North Dakota State College of Science)
Tyson Hetzer	TE	6-7	265	4.75	Glendora, Calif. (Citrus CC)
Adrian Hilburn	WR	6-2	190	4.4	San Francisco, Calif. (City College of SF)
Dan Hoch	OL	6-6	302	5.21	Harlan, Iowa
Keelan Johnson	DB	6-0	195	4.5	Mesa, Ariz.
Simi Kuli	DE	6-4	270	5.0	Hawthorne, Calif. (El Camino CC)
John Levorson	ATH	6-4	185	4.55	Crete, Neb.
Cameron Meredith	DE	6-4	222	4.6	Santa Ana, Calif. (Mater Dei)
Shaun Mohler	LB	6-3	225	4.6	Costa Mesa, Calif. (Orange Coast CC)
Collins Okafor	RB	6-1	210	4.54	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)
Kyler Reed	ATH	6-3	204	4.5	Overland Park, Kan. (St. Thomas Aquinas)
Riley Reiff	DE	6-6	250	4.8	Parkston, S.D.
Doug Rippey	LB	6-2	218	4.6	Columbus, Ohio (McKinley)
Baker Steinkuhler	OL	6-6	290	4.88	Lincoln, Neb. (Southwest)
Brandon Thompson	OL	6-6	280	5.08	The Woodlands, Texas
David Whitmore	DB	6-2	190	4.5	Port Arthur, Texas (Memorial)
Josh Williams	DE	6-4	220	4.8	Denton, Texas (Ryan)

For more daily recruiting information, visit HuskersIllustrated.com, a member of the Rivals.com network.

ly headlined by in-state offensive tackle Baker Steinkuhler (6-foot-6, 290 pounds) of Lincoln Southwest High School and defensive end Simi Kuli (6-4, 270) of El Camino Community College in Torrance, Calif. Steinkuhler is rated a five-star prospect by Rivals.com and the nation's No. 13 player overall. Kuli, also a recipient of a five-star rating by Rivals, is considered to be the top junior college player in the country.

In addition, Nebraska holds pledges from four players ranked as four-star performers by Rivals.com, including linebacker Will Compton (6-2, 214) of Bonne Terre, Mo., offensive lineman Dan Hoch (6-6, 302) of Harlan Iowa, junior college linebacker Shaun Mohler (6-3, 225) of Orange Coast CC in Costa Mesa, Calif., and offensive lineman Bryce Givens (6-6, 257) of Denver, Colo.

By comparison, Missouri currently has the second-highest-rated recruiting class in the Big 12 North, standing at No. 36 on Rivals' list. The Tigers' commit list is headlined by four-star tight end Andrew Jones of Smithville, Mo. Rivals ranks Jones as the No. 15 tight end prospect in the country.

Colorado currently holds the nation's No. 39 class, according to Rivals. The Buffaloes have garnered commitments from nine prospects, including four-star defensive end Jon Major (6-4, 230) of Parker, Colo., and running back Ray Polk (6-0, 195) of Phoenix, Ariz. Major ranks as the nation's No. 2 defensive end and No. 73 prospect overall. Polk ranks as the nation's No. 11 running back.

Kansas State has received oral commitments from 13 prospects and is ranked the No. 46 class in the country by Rivals. The Wildcats are followed by Kansas at No. 50 (nine commitments) and Iowa State at No. 58 (11 commitments).

Nebraska ranks tops in the Big 12 North in total commitments (21), tops in average star ranking per player (3.32) and tops in the number of four- or five-star rated players (7). By comparison, the other five teams in the division have a combined total of three commitments rated as four-star or better prospects.

Oklahoma currently has the highest-rated class in the conference, overall. The Sooners, standing at 16 commitments, rank No. 6 on Rivals' list.

RECRUITING NOTES

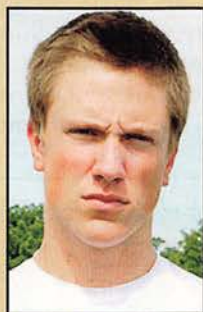
Quarterback Looking Around

By Sean Stevens

With the uncertainty surrounding the Nebraska coaching staff intensifying every day, the 2008 Husker recruiting class continues to take hits with players either de-committing or taking visits to competing schools.

Last week, it was the de-commitment of Detroit running back Jonas Gray (5-foot-10, 213 pounds) and his subsequent commitment to Notre Dame. This week, there are two more de-commitments — Rivals.com five-star quarterback Blaine Gabbert (6-4, 226) of Ballwin, Mo., and three-star wide receiver D.J. Woods (6-0, 169) from Strongsville, Ohio.

Gabbert was considered the crown jewel of the Husker class, and had been instrumental in recruiting other prospects to join him in Lincoln. He said that with the way things are in the Husker program, he felt the need to look around.



Blaine Gabbert

"I felt that the turmoil and uncertainty in the program led me to evaluate my other options," said Gabbert. "I have the utmost respect and admiration for Coach (Bill) Callahan and Coach (Shawn) Watson. They were very professional and understanding of my decision."

Gabbert visited Missouri both the week before and the week after his announcement, but maintains that he hasn't made a decision yet.

"I'm going to make a thorough re-evaluation of all schools recruiting me," he said. "I am open to whoever. I haven't contacted anyone (since de-committing)."

Woods' comments echoed those of Gabbert.

"Nebraska is going through a difficult time right now, and I thought it was best for me and my family if we reopened things to see what happens," Woods said.

He has not ruled out re-committing to Nebraska.

"They talked to me and told me to keep them in mind," he said. "They said to take things slow. They'll be one of the schools that I consider. Just because I de-committed doesn't mean I'm going to rush out and commit to another school. They will still be one of the schools I consider; they've been there for me."

Woods has some visit plans in mind.

"I went to West Virginia last week, and I'm going to Penn State this weekend," he said. "I'm going to look at Auburn and North Carolina, and Nebraska too."

Another prospect who was thought to be a lock for the Huskers is offensive lineman Dan Hoch (6-6, 302) of Harlan, Iowa. Hoch remains committed to Nebraska, but he did take a visit to Iowa recently.

"I'm solid with Nebraska right now," Hoch said. "With what's gone on and the turmoil and all of that, I just wanted to see what else is out there. I haven't been to Iowa since last year, so I thought I'd go see the game."

Although he remains a Husker for now, Hoch has a list of schools who are still recruiting him.

"I'm pretty sure I'm not going to go to any more schools for now because I'm focused on the state playoffs for football, but I've talked to other colleges," said Hoch. "I've talked to Wisconsin, Oklahoma, KU, K-State, Missouri, and Illinois."

Which prospects will remain Huskers come Signing Day? Time will tell . . . ■

The Sooners currently have pledges from 11 athletes that are rated, at least, four stars by Rivals. The plumbs of the class, at this stage, look to be running back Jermie Calhoun (6-0, 210) of Van, Texas, and defensive end R.J. Washington (6-3, 245) of Keller, Texas. Calhoun is rated the No. 2 running back and the No. 15 player in the country by Rivals. Washington is regarded as the No. 1 defensive end prospect and No. 9 prospect overall.

Texas always comes through with strong recruiting efforts, and this year doesn't appear to be any different. The Longhorns currently stand at No. 9 in Rivals' recruiting rankings with 19 overall pledges and 10 players with four- or five-star ratings.

A trio of Lone Star State prep stand outs highlight the Longhorns' early recruiting success, including cornerbacks Aaron Williams (6-1, 175) of Round Rock and D.J. Monroe (5-9, 165) of Angleton and defensive tackle Jarvis Humphrey (6-2, 290) of Cedar Hill. Williams and Monroe rank as the No. 2 and 3 cornerback prospects in the country, according to Rivals,

while Humphrey ranks as the nation's third best defensive tackle.

Texas A&M falls right behind Nebraska with the nation's No. 13 ranked recruiting class. The Aggies currently hold the most commitments in the conference (24), with seven athletes receiving four-star or better ratings from Rivals.

Athlete Derek Hall (5-10, 210) of Beaumont, Texas, is the most ballyhooed member of Texas A&M's class. He ranks as the nation's No. 88 prospect overall by Rivals. Kapron Lewis-Moore (6-4, 225), a defensive end out of Weatherford, Texas, and defensive tackle Rod Davis (6-2, 300) will also bring plenty of star power to College Station. Both are ranked in the top 15 at their position by Rivals.

Texas Tech's early recruiting class ranks No. 26 on the Rivals list, while Oklahoma State sits at No. 34 and Baylor at No. 55.

On paper, the South's recruiting efforts appear to be much stronger than their counterparts in the North. The six schools in the South have a combined 32 commitments from prospects rated as four stars or better

by Rivals, whereas the six schools from the North have a combined 10 commitments with a similar rating.

The rankings are merely a snapshot of how things stack up at this stage of the recruiting process. Three months remain before players will sign their letters of intent with their chosen schools. A lot can still happen over the course of the next few weeks.

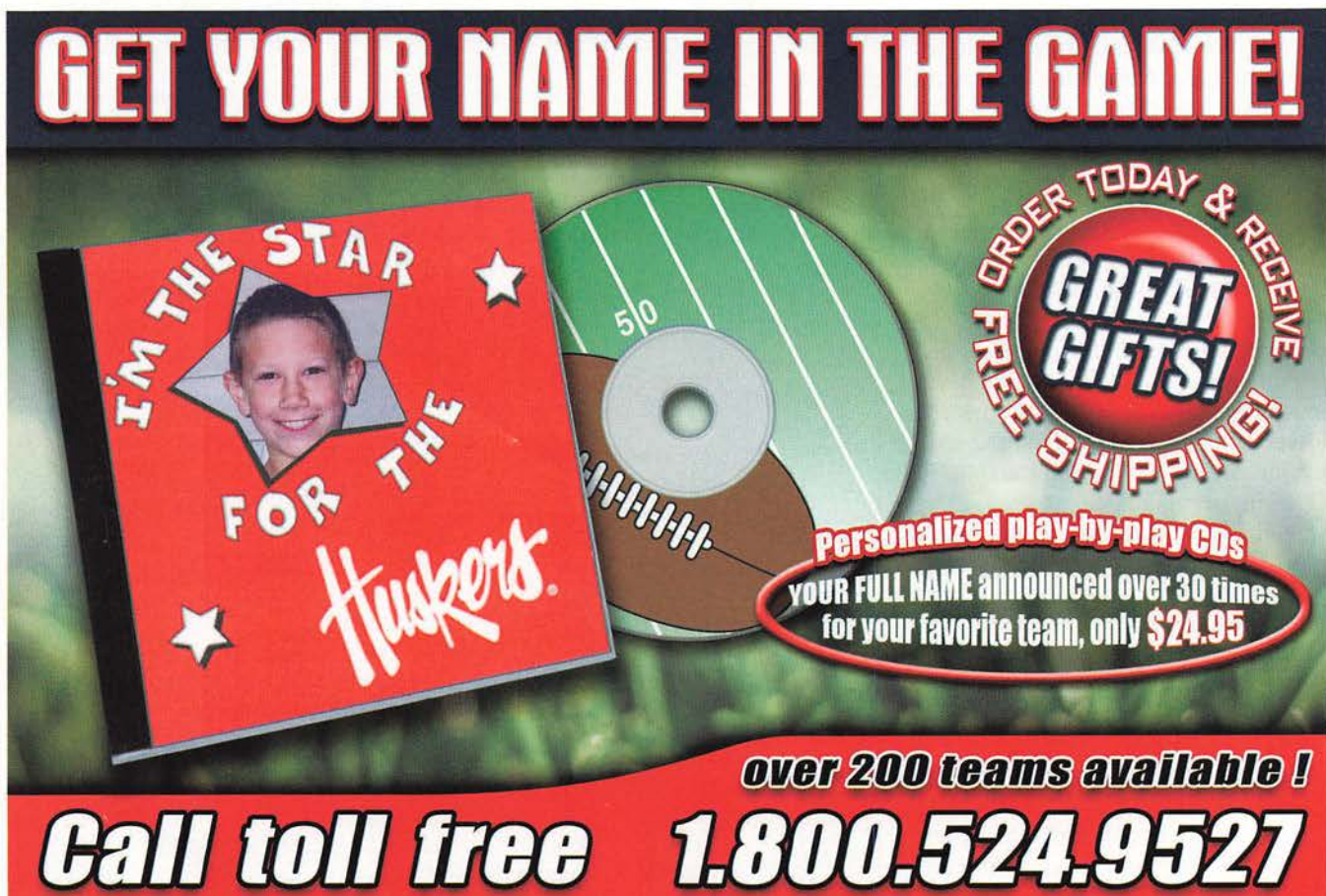
Will Nebraska lose anymore of its current commitments? With every additional loss on the field, more rumors of coaching change in Lincoln arise, leading to hesitancy and nervousness on the part of Husker pledges.

At the same time, new prospects will continue to pop up on Nebraska's radar, and some familiar faces will begin to make their college decisions.

Nebraska has a good shot of finishing with a strong recruiting effort for 2008. However, just like with the season on the field, it's too early to take anything for granted. ■

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Nebraska junior wide receiver Nate Swift goes over the top of Kansas safety Patrick Resby to catch a 26-yard pass from Joe Ganz early in the third quarter. (Photo by Scott Bruhn)

Kansas 76

Nebraska 39

It Didn't Las

***First-time starter
Ganz got the Huskers
off to a solid start***

**By Mike Babcock
Photos: Scott Bruhn**

With 1:24 remaining in the first half, Kansas took a timeout. "Timeout Kansas State," referee Randy Christal said. The largest crowd in the history of Memorial Stadium in Lawrence, Kan., booed.

"Correction," said Christal. "Correction. Kansas."

The booing subsided slightly, turning to cheers 8 seconds later as Kansas scored a touchdown for a 48-21 lead. Even as the blowout of Nebraska gained momentum, the Jayhawks' intrastate rivalry intruded.

Later, when Iowa State's 31-20 victory against Kansas State was announced, the crowd cheered again. Kansas is having the season of a lifetime, and Jayhawk fans were savoring every moment of the day their team, No. 8 nationally going in, won a ninth consecutive game and embarrassed Nebraska in the process, 76-39.

Early on, though all-too-brief for the Cornhuskers, it seemed as if Kansas might be susceptible to an upset, directed by Joe Ganz. The junior quarterback from Palos Heights, Ill., started for the first time in his career, replacing Sam Keller, who suffered a season-ending broken collarbone late in the Texas game.

"It'll be tough because I'm excited. I'm real excited," Ganz said during Nebraska's weekly teleconference on Tuesday. "I've been waiting for this opportunity, and it's tough to keep an even keel.

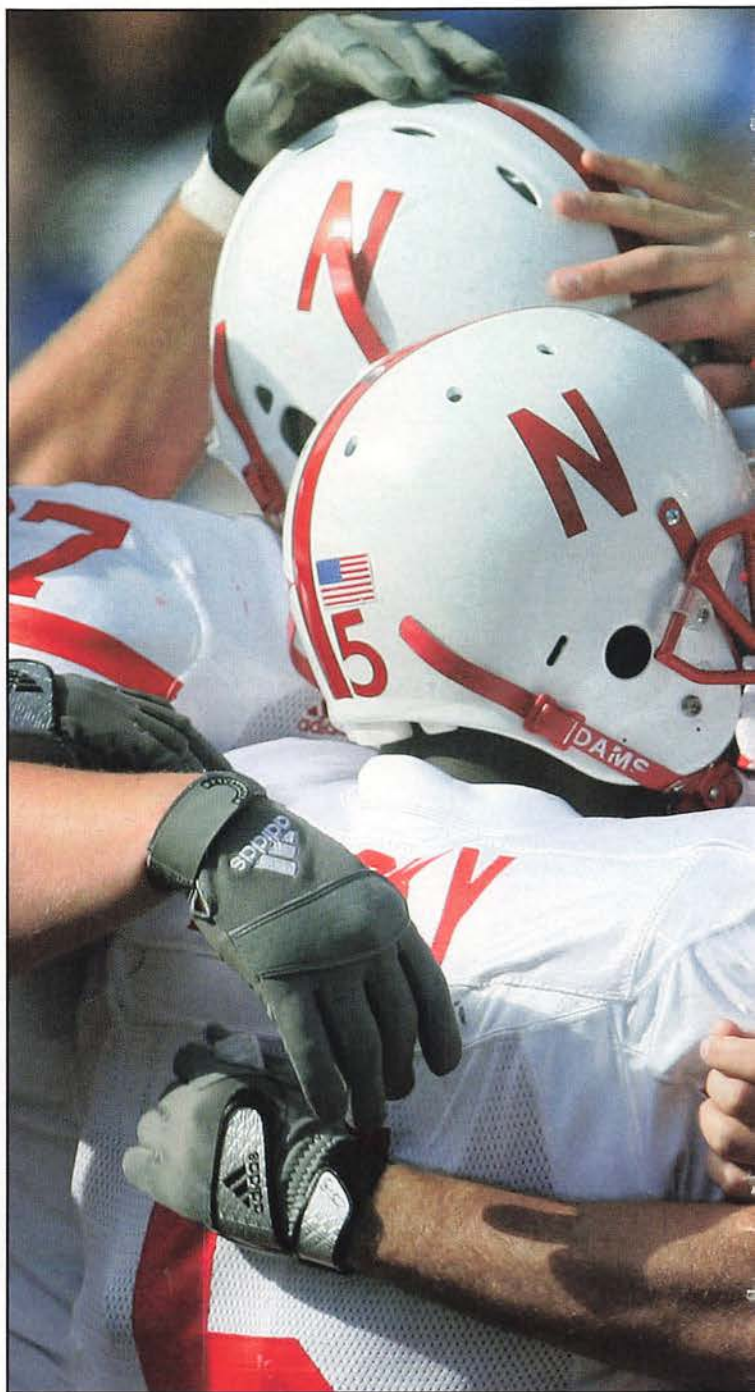
"But once, I think, that first play is over with, I'll be calm, and I'll be acting like I've done it before."

His first play was a 4-yard pass completion to tight end Sean Hill. His second was a handoff to Marlon Lucky for a 1-yard gain. And his third was an option pitch to Roy Helu Jr., for 7 yards and a first down.

That's right, an option play. The Kansas defense was caught off-guard.

Seven plays later, including pass completions to Frantz Hardy for 13 yards and Maurice Purify for 18 yards, Ganz made a dive into the end zone, illustrating something else he had said on Tuesday.

TURNING POINT



Nebraska quarterback Joe Ganz (smiling) receives congratulations after his 3-yard touchdown run gave NU a 7-0 lead.

"My big thing probably is, when plays break down, make something happen with my feet, maybe extend the play a little bit, wait for the receiver to come back open, simple things like that," he said.

"I like to run the ball, too, so if nothing's open, I'm not going to throw it out of bounds. I won't throw it away. I'll just go

t Long



north-south and get as much as I can, and do whatever my team needs me to do to win."

As it turned out, he wouldn't run much: five times for a net of 11 yards. With Kansas scoring at will against the Cornhusker defense, Ganz had no opportunity to run. He threw and threw and threw some more, 50 times in all, completing 25 for 405 yards and four touchdowns, with four interceptions.

In contrast, Kansas balanced pass and run. The Jayhawks

REPORT CARD

RUSHING OFFENSE

The Cornhuskers rushed for 79 yards and averaged 3.4 yards per carry, and those numbers were distorted by the fact that freshman Roy Helu Jr. rushed for 49 yards on eight carries in the fourth quarter, after the outcome was decided. Helu was the leading rusher in an otherwise non-existent running game. ★

PASSING OFFENSE

Joe Ganz threw for 405 yards and four touchdowns. The first half, in particular, he made "some incredible plays," said coach Bill Callahan. Ganz spread the ball around, completing passes to 10 different receivers, with Maurice Purify and Marlon Lucky catching 13 passes between them. Ganz threw four interceptions and was sacked once, but the scoring explosion by Kansas left him no choice but to try to make plays. ★★☆☆

RUSHING DEFENSE

Kansas was so productive passing that the running game took a backseat, sort of. Nebraska, which went into the game ranked No. 119 (out of 119) in the nation against the run, couldn't stop Brandon McAnderson, who rushed for 119 yards and four touchdowns, to tie a school record. ★

PASSING DEFENSE

Jayhawks quarterback Todd Reesing set a school single-game record with six touchdown passes. The 5-foot-11, 200-pound sophomore from Austin, Texas, completed 30-of-41 from 354 yards. "He has a chance, maybe, to be the best I've coached," Kansas coach Mark Mangino said. "He can handle praise, and he deserves it." (0★)

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kansas won special-teams play as well. Marcus Herford returned six kickoffs for 203 yards to give the Jayhawks' offense consistently good field position. Even though the Jayhawks' Scott Webb had to kick off 12 times, he still managed enough energy to send four of the kickoffs into the end zone for touchbacks. ★★

NUMBERS

Kansas scored more points against Nebraska than any team ever has. The previous record was 70 by Texas Tech in 2004. The Jayhawks' 48 points in the first half were a record against the Cornhuskers (for a first half; they gave up 49 in the second half against Texas Tech in 2004). The points were the third-most ever scored by Kansas, which defeated South Dakota State 86-6 in 1947 and Washington (Mo.) 83-0 in 1923.

76

NEBRASKA-KANSAS NOTES

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

The Jayhawks, who went into the game ranked No. 8 nationally, "played well in all dimensions of the game," said Nebraska coach Bill Callahan. "You have to give them credit."

Did they try to run up the score?

"Oh, gosh, no," Callahan said.

Kansas coach Mark Mangino said he had conversations with his coaches throughout the game, and "we just wanted to keep running our offense. We wanted to run our system and let the kids see if they could continue to make plays. I didn't think we were going to score 76 points today, but the kids really played well. They played smart, sharp football." And they made few mistakes.

"My hat goes off to that team," Cornhusker cornerback Andre Jones said. "They deserve everything they got. Nothing was given to them. They earned it. And I respect them so much for that."

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Nebraska has to hold together somehow, with two games remaining. "How I help myself get better after a loss like this is (to) motivate my teammates because you can't be by yourself in this," said Jones. "You've got to uplift all your other players, too. You don't know how they're feeling. Everybody's feeling the same. But you've got to be that one that's just, 'Hey, look, there's a light at the end of the tunnel.' You've got to keep working."

Can the Cornhuskers win their final two games and become bowl eligible? "I believe we can," he said. "I think we can win these last two games and get there. But right now, we've just got to take it one day at a time. We can't think about the bowl. We can't think about nothing else. We've just got to worry about practice because if we don't practice well, we're not going to get there."

STEPPING IN

With the linebacker position depleted by injuries, Tyler Wortman, a junior walk-on from Grand Island, Neb., moved to the top of the depth chart at strongside linebacker. He didn't start, however, because the Cornhuskers opened with two linebackers and a fifth defensive back. He was credited with 1.5 tackles for loss.

"It's really hard to talk about," Wortman said of the game. "You just wish it could have went the other way. We wanted it really bad. We've just got to do what we can next week."

"We know we've got to bounce back. We can't ever give up."

SMALL CONSOLATION

Nebraska's 39 points were more than the combined total of the Jayhawks' first five opponents at home. Kansas allowed 33 points in those five games.

MO MOVES UP

Senior wide receiver Maurice Purify's three touchdown catches move him to a third-place tie on the career list. He has 14. He also moved into the top 10 in career receptions, with 74, and career receiving yards, with 1,200.

GANZ IMPRESSIVE

Junior quarterback Joe Ganz completed six passes of 20 yards or more and finished with 405 yards, the third-most in school history. "It was definitely surprising that they came out and passed that much," Kansas free safety Justin Thornton said. "At halftime, we had to make some adjustments, and we were able to come out in the second half and put on a pretty good defensive show."

LUCKY STRIKES AGAIN

Junior I-back Marlon Lucky caught six passes for 83 yards, 62 of them for a touchdown to give the Cornhuskers a 14-7 lead. With his first reception, he broke the school single-season record, which he shared with Johnny Rodgers. Lucky now has 61 catches.

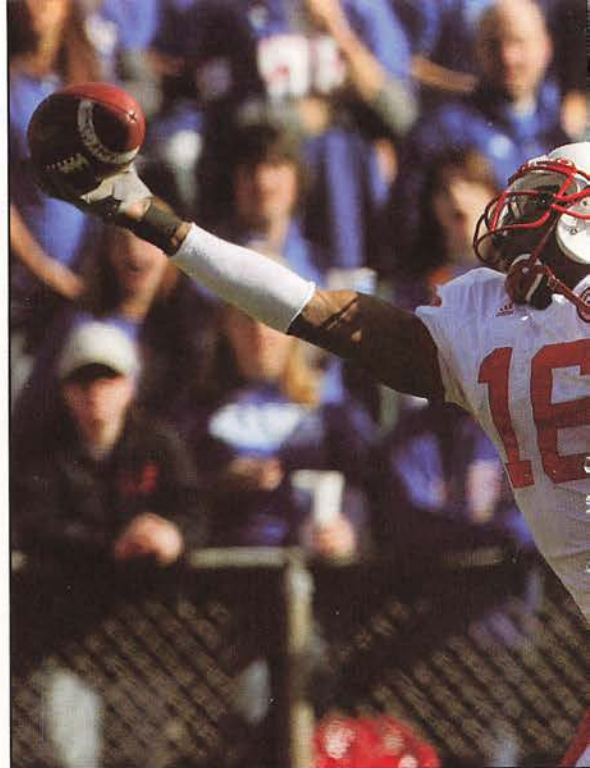
He has caught at least three passes in 13 of the last 16 games.

"We expected him to get some more balls," said Thornton.

Lucky has 1,378 all-purpose yards, surpassing his total of 1,266 yards last season. He needs 97 all-purpose yards in Nebraska's remaining games for the Cornhuskers' highest total since 1997, when Ahman Green amassed 1,982 yards. All-purpose yardage includes rushing, receiving and returns.

NO ROSE

Jim Rose, the radio voice of Nebraska football, was missing for what were described by Dave Witt, vice president and general manager of the Huskers Sports Network, as personal reasons. Rose was replaced by Greg Sharpe. ■



Nebraska wide receiver Maurice Purify had a big day, including a one-handed catch (above) for one of his three touchdowns and a 60-yard gain (right) when he battled KU cornerback Kendrick Harper (24).

rushed 49 times for 218 yards and five touchdowns, including four by Brandon McAnderson, and they threw 41 times, completing 30, for 354 yards and six touchdowns. Sophomore quarterback Todd Reesing did all of the passing, a record-setting performance that in all likelihood will earn him Big 12 Offensive Player of the Week recognition. (See Quick Hits, page 35)

Considering the precision with which Reesing and his mates carved up the Cornhuskers, there was really no turning point in the game. Kansas responded with a touchdown. Ganz produced a second touchdown. Kansas responded to that with a touchdown and then another as the dam burst.

The Jayhawks ran 90 plays, without a turnover, and they were penalized only twice, for 10 yards.

The end couldn't come soon enough for Nebraska fans. Kansas scored point No. 69 with 3:34 remaining in the third quarter. By then, the Nebraska section in the southeast corner of the stadium was half empty, and Little Red was bouncing upside down on the track in front of the section, a fitting image.

The official statistics distributed afterward showed Keller with one tackle, even though he made the trip to Lawrence on his own and watched



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Who Stood Out?

OFFENSE

The play of Joe Ganz in his debut as a starter was among few bright spots. The junior from Palos Heights, Ill., was sharp from the start, directing touchdown drives on Nebraska's first two possessions, capping the first with a 3-yard run and the second with a 62-yard pass to Marlon Lucky.



Joe Ganz

Ganz completed 25-of-50 passes for 405 yards and four touchdowns, with four interceptions — three in the second half as he tried to keep the Cornhuskers in the game. "When you get behind by that margin, you work so hard to try to close it," coach Bill Callahan said.

Offensive coordinator Shawn Watson said Ganz "was out there

competing."

Senior wide receiver Maurice Purify also stepped up, catching seven passes for 158 yards and three touchdowns, the best performance of his career, in his own words.

The first two touchdown catches came against All-Big 12 cornerback Aqib Talib. "Mo showed what he can do against an outstanding corner," said Callahan. "He made some great plays today."

Neither he nor Ganz nor anyone else on the offense could make enough plays, however.

DEFENSE



Steve Octavien

Senior linebacker Steve Octavien was credited with a game-high 11 tackles, while safeties Ben Eisenhart and Larry Asante were involved in nine tackles each.

SPECIAL TEAMS



Alex Henery

Redshirted freshman Alex Henery kicked his seventh consecutive field goal, without a miss. Freshman Prince Amukamara pressured Kansas punter Kyle Tucker on the Jayhawks' first possession. The result was a 22-yard punt and field position at the Kansas 46-yard line. Ten plays later, Nebraska led 7-0. The lead was short-lived.

Injury Report

Linebackers Lance Brandenburg, Bo Ruud and Blake Lawrence didn't make the trip to Lawrence because of injuries. Brandenburg has been lost for the season, along with quarterback Sam Keller, who made the trip on his own.



ing in street clothes. Bryan Wilson wears a No. 9, the cause for the confusion. ive tackle Carl Nicks also sted with a tackle, but that urate. After the Jayhawks' uckey intercepted a Ganz returned it 38 yards, midway he third quarter, Nicks, who

began his college career at New Mexico State as a defensive tackle, slammed him to the turf.

The hit was among the hardest of the game by a Cornhusker, prompting someone in the pressbox to remark that 6-foot-5, 330-pound Nicks probably should have been playing defense. ■

GAME STATS

SCORING

Nov. 3, 2007
Memorial Stadium Lawrence, Kan.
Attendance 51,910

	1	2	3	4	F
Nebraska	14	10	7	8	39
Kansas	21	27	21	7	76

First Quarter

	NU	KU
NU Ganz 3-yard Run (Henery Kick) 09:04 Drive: 10 plays 46 yds 4:24	7	0
KU Meier Pass from Reesing 13-yards (Webb Kick) 06:38 Drive: 7 plays 68 yds 2:19	7	7
NU Lucky Pass from Ganz 62-yards (Henery Kick) 04:58 Drive: 3 plays 70 yds 1:34	14	7
KU McAnderson 2-yard Run (Webb Kick) 03:16 Drive: 6 plays 50 yds 1:31	14	14
KU Sharp Pass from Reesing 26-yards (Webb Kick) 01:00 Drive: 5 plays 62 yds 1:41	14	21

Second Quarter

	NU	KU
KU McAnderson 9-yard Run (Webb Kick) 10:34 Drive: 10 plays 70 yds 4:26	14	28
NU Purify Pass from Ganz 19-yards (Henery Kick) 09:44 Drive: 4 plays 80 yds 0:50	21	28
KU Henry Pass from Reesing 5-yards (Webb Kick) 08:30 Drive: 4 plays 61 yds 1:07	21	35
KU McAnderson 1-yard Run (Webb Kick) 02:43 Drive: 13 plays 62 yds 4:00	21	42
KU Briscoe Pass from Reesing 13-yards (Webb Kick Failed) 01:16 Drive: 3 plays 19 yds 0:55	21	48
NU Henery 27-yard Field Goal 00:12 Drive: 8 plays 70 yds 1:04	24	48

Third Quarter

	NU	KU
NU Purify Pass from Ganz 14-yards (Henery Kick) 11:39 Drive: 9 plays 78 yds 3:14	31	48
KU Briscoe Pass from Reesing 14-yards (Webb Kick) 08:17 Drive: 8 plays 44 yds 3:14	31	55
KU Briscoe Pass from Reesing 7-yards (Webb Kick) 05:45 Drive: 5 plays 23 yds 1:35	31	62
KU Sharp 11-yard Run (Webb Kick) 03:34 Drive: 4 plays 30 yds 1:11	31	69

Fourth Quarter

	NU	KU
KU McAnderson 6-yard Run (Webb Kick) 11:12 Drive: 5 plays 37 yds 1:38	31	76
NU Purify Pass from Ganz 8-yards (Swift Pass Good) 04:26 Drive: 14 plays 80 yds 6:46	39	76

TEAM STATS

	NU	KU
Total First Downs	22	34
Rushing	6	15
Passing	16	17
Penalty	0	2
Rushing Attempts	23	49
Yards Gained Rushing	89	228
Yards Lost Rushing	10	10
Net Yards Rushing	79	218
Net Yards Passing	405	354
Passes Attempted	50	41
Passes Completed	25	30
Had Intercepted	4	0
Percent Completion	50.0%	73.2%
Yards per Attempt	8.1	8.6
Yards per Completion	16.2	11.8
Total Offensive Plays	73	90
Total Net Yards	484	572
Avg. Gain Per Play	6.6	6.4
Fumbles: No-Lost	1-1	0-0
Penalties: No-Yards	4-22	2-10
Punts: No-Yards	3-109	1-22
Avg. Per Punt	36.3	22.0
Avg. Net Punt	33.7	22.0
Punt Returns: No-Yards	0-0	2-8
Kickoff Returns: No-Yards	8-161	6-203
Interception Returns: No-Yards	0-0	4-66
Possession Time	24:39	35:21
Third-Down Conversions	8-15	12-15
Percentage	53.3%	80.0%
Fourth-Down Conversions	1-1	0-0
Percentage	100.0%	0.0%
Sacks By: No-Yards	0-0	1-7



NU's Todd Peterson hauls in a pass from Joe Ganz. Peterson had two catches for 59 yards.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

NEBRASKA

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Helu	9	56	0	56	6.2	0	24
Lucky	8	15	0	15	1.9	0	5
Ganz	5	18	7	11	2.2	1	10
Castille	1	0	3	-3	-3.0	0	0
Total	23	89	10	79	3.4	1	24

	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Ganz	50	25	50.0	4	405	4	62
Total	50	25	50.0	4	405	4	62

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Purify	7	158	3	60
Lucky	6	83	1	62
Peterson	2	59	0	35
Swift	3	42	0	26
Hardy	1	13	0	13
Hill	2	13	0	9
Holt	1	13	0	13
Teafatiller	1	13	0	13
Nunn	1	9	0	9
Helu	1	2	0	2
Total	25	405	4	62

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Grixby	4	82	0	28
Hardy	2	48	0	29
Lucky	1	19	0	19
Jones	1	12	0	12
Total	8	161	0	29

	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener	3	36.3	38	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	3	36.3	38	0	0	1	0	0	0

	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Henery	1	1	27	0
Total	1	1	27	0

	Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Octavien	6	5	11	1-2	0-0	0	0	0
Asante	3	6	9	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Eisenhart	4	5	9	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Green	4	4	8	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Murillo	5	2	7	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Allen	2	4	6	0-1	0-0	0	0	0
Grixby	3	3	6	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Thenarse	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Dillard	1	3	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Blue	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bowman	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Jones	3	0	3	1-1	0-0	0	0	0
Potter	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Culbert	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Erickson	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
McKeon	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Suh	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Wilson	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Wortman	1	1	2	1-5	0-0	0	0	0
Barfield	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Covey	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0
Dixon	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0
Helu	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0
Johnson	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0
Martin	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0
Nicks	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0
O'Leary	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0
Steinkuhler	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0
Swift	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0
Turner	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0

KANSAS

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
McAnderson	25	121	2	119	4.8	4	17
Sharp	11	44	0	44	4.0	1	11
Henry	1	23	0	23	23.0	0	23
Quigley	6	19	2	17	2.8	0	6
Reesing	4	16	6	10	2.5	0	11
Meier	1	5	0	5	5.0	0	5
TEAM	1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
Total	49	228	10	218	4.4	5	23

	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Reesing	41	30	73.2	0	354	6	42
Total	41	30	73.2	0	354	6	42

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Henry	6	101	1	42
Fields	6	55	0	25
Briscoe	5	52	3	14
Meier	4	42	1	14
McAnderson	1	36	0	36
Fine	5	33	0	11
Sharp	2	27	1	26
Foster	1	8	0	8
Total	30	354	6	42

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
A. Webb	2	8	0	5
Total	2	8	0	5

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Herford	6	203	0	49
Total	6	203	0	49

	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Tucker	1	22.0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	22.0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
S. Webb	0	1	0	0
Total	0	1	0	0

	Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Rivera	3	4	7	1-3	0-0	1	1	0
Harris	4	1	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Holt	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	3	0	0
Brorsen	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Springer	4	0	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Stuckey	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	1
Talib	3	1	4	1-3	0-0	1	0	0

2007 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

	G	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Lucky, Marlon	10	178	885	38	847	4.8	6	41	84.7
Castille, Quentin	10	65	297	4	293	4.5	4	23	29.3
Helu, Roy	6	43	206	3	203	4.7	0	24	33.8
Glenn, Cody	5	27	87	9	78	2.9	2	20	15.6
Ganz, Joe	4	8	45	7	38	4.8	1	12	9.5
Culbert, Major	8	5	35	0	35	7.0	1	17	4.4
Hardy, Frantz	10	1	19	0	19	19.0	0	19	1.9
Purify, Maurice	9	1	8	0	8	8.0	0	8	0.9
Nunn, Terrence	10	3	4	14	-10	-3.3	0	4	-1.0
Keller, Sam	9	25	19	97	-78	-3.1	0	4	-8.7

PASSING

	G	Att	Comp	% Int	Yds	TD	Lg	YD/G
Keller, Sam	9	325	205	63.1	10	2422	14	73 269.1
Ganz, Joe	4	54	28	51.9	4	441	5	62 110.2
Lucky, Marlon	10	1	1	100.0	0	20	1	20 2.02

RECEIVING LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Purify, Maurice	9	40	570	14.2	6	60	63.3
Lucky, Marlon	10	61	512	8.4	2	62	51.2
Swift, Nate	10	32	450	14.1	3	35	45.0
Nunn, Terrence	10	26	308	11.8	0	30	30.8
Hill, Sean	10	18	288	16.0	3	73	28.8
Peterson, Todd	10	12	228	19.0	2	44	22.8
Hardy, Frantz	10	11	211	19.2	0	60	21.1
Erickson, Dan	10	5	52	10.4	0	19	5.2
Glenn, Cody	5	6	52	8.7	0	19	10.4
Helu, Roy	6	5	40	8.0	0	21	6.7
Teafatiller, Hunter	8	4	34	8.5	0	13	4.2
Sand, Andy	10	3	31	10.3	0	15	3.1
McNeill, Mike	5	1	25	25.0	0	25	5.0
Phillips, J.B.	10	2	19	9.5	1	13	1.9
Castille, Quentin	10	1	15	15.0	0	15	1.5
Young, Dreu	7	1	14	14.0	0	14	2.0
Holt, Menelik	7	1	13	13.0	0	13	1.9
Lawson, Thomas	8	3	11	3.7	3	6	1.4

PUNT RETURNS LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Grixby, Courtney	10	7	36	5.1	0	16	3.6
Jones, Andre	9	3	35	11.7	0	24	3.9

KICKOFF RETURNS LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Grixby, Courtney	10	36	880	24.4	0	51	88.0
Jones, Andre	9	13	278	21.4	0	31	30.9

PUNTING

	G	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener, Dan	10	44	41.2	52	0	3	13	2	14	
Henery, Alex	10	1	32.0	32	0	0	0	0	0	1

FIELD GOALS

	G	Att	Made	Lg	Blkd
Henery, Alex	10	7	7	39	0
Kunalic, Adi	10	1	1	46	0

DEFENSE LEADERS

	G	Tack	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Octavien, Steve	10	45	26	71	6-30	0-4	2	0	0
Asante, Larry	10	30	35	65	0-0	0-0	3	1	0
McKeon, Corey	10	26	32	58	6-19	1-8	5	0	1
Murillo, Armando	10	34	23	57	0-0	0-0	7	0	0
Brandenburg, L.	9	37	14	51	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Green, Tierre	10	18	27	45	0-0	0-0	3	0	0
Potter, Zach	10	25	18	43	9-23	2-10	1	1	1
Ruud, Bo	9	22	20	42	3-9	0-0	1	2	0
Dillard, Phillip	10	20	14	34	0-1	0-0	2	0	0
Eisenhart, Ben	10	17	14	31	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

TEAM STATISTICS

	NU	OPP
Total First Downs	229	249
Rushing	71	117
Passing	141	116
Penalty	17	16
Total Net Yards	4307	4776
Total Plays	740	788
Yards Per Play	5.8	6.1
Yards Per Game	430.7	477.6
Rushing Attempts-Yards	360-1424	452-2401
Yards Per Attempt	4.0	5.3
Yards Per Game	142.4	240.1
Pass Att.-Comp.-Int.	380-234-14	336-193-8
Passing Yards	2883	2375
Yards Per Completion	12.3	12.3
Yards Per Game	288.3	237.5
Punting: No.-Avg.	45-41.0	42-40.6
Fumbles-Lost	15-11	12-3
Penalties-Yards	61-461	59-492
Sacks By-Yds. Lost	9-54	14-95
Third-Down Conversions	66-149	75-151
Conversion Pct.	44.3	49.7
Fourth-Down Conversions	9-16	8-11
Conversion Pct.	56.2	72.7
Avg. Time Of Possession	29:04	30:56

Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
Nebraska	48	78	73	78	0	277
Opponents	74	112	104	69	0	359

2007 RESULTS, SCHEDULE

1 Sept. 1	Nevada (5-4), W 52-10	1-0
2 Sept. 8	@Wake Forest (6-3), W 20-17	2-0
3 Sept. 15	USC (7-2), L 49-31	2-1
4 Sept. 22	Ball State (5-5), W 41-40	3-1
5 Sept. 29	Iowa State (2-7), W 35-17	4-1
6 Oct. 6	@Missouri (8-1), L 41-6	4-2
7 Oct. 13	Oklahoma St. (5-4), L 45-14	4-3
8 Oct. 20	Texas A&M (6-4), L 36-14	4-4
9 Oct. 27	@Texas (8-2), L 28-25	4-5
10 Nov. 3	@Kansas (9-0), L 76-39	4-6
11 Nov. 10	Kansas State (5-4), 11:30 a.m., Versus	
12 Nov. 23	@Colorado (5-5), 11 a.m., ABC	

SCOUTING REPORT

GAME 11

Kansas State Nov. 10

Location: Manhattan, Kan

Enrollment: 23,137

2007 record: 5-4

Coach: Ron Prince, 2nd

year

Series: Nebraska leads 74-15-2

11:30 a.m., Versus Network
Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.

Quick Facts

Kansas State fumbled the opening kickoff, Iowa State capitalized, and the Wildcats never quite recovered in a 31-20 ISU win at Ames.

K-State is just 1-3 on the road this season. The Wildcats defeated Texas

41-21 in Austin and have lost at Auburn, Oklahoma State and Iowa State.

Sophomore quarterback Josh Freeman has passed for 4,301 career yards, becoming just the eighth quarterback in K-State history to throw for more than 4,000 yards.

Wildcat to Watch

Senior wide receiver Jordy Nelson, a Biletnikoff Award semifinalist, had 13 catches for 194 yards against ISU, the sixth time this season he has surpassed 100 yards. Nelson has 2,418 career yards, third on K-State's all-time career yardage list. He is just 39 yards behind Michael Smith (1988-91), who stands second.



BIG 12 AT A GLANCE

North					South				
	W	L	T			W	L	T	
Kansas	5	0	9	0	Oklahoma	4	1	8	1
Missouri	4	1	8	1	Texas	4	2	8	2
Kansas St.	3	3	5	4	Okla. St.	3	2	5	4
Colorado	3	3	5	5	Texas Tech	3	3	7	3
Nebraska	1	5	4	6	Texas A&M	3	3	6	4
Iowa State	1	5	2	8	Baylor	0	6	3	7

Saturday, Nov. 3

Kansas 76, Nebraska 39
Iowa State 31, Kansas State 20
Missouri 55, Colorado 10
Texas 38, Oklahoma State 35
Oklahoma 42, Texas A&M 14
Texas Tech 38, Baylor 7

ON DECK

At Colorado Nov. 23

Location: Boulder, Colo.

Enrollment: 28,624

2007 record: 5-5

Coach: Dan Hawkins, 2nd

Series: Nebraska leads 46-17-2

11 a.m., ABC
Folsom Field, Boulder, Colo.



TENTATIVE 2-DEEPS

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

WR	87	Nate Swift**	6-2	200	Jr.
	16	Maurice Purify*	6-4	220	Sr.
LT	77	Carl Nicks*	6-5	330	Sr.
	65	Mike Smith	6-6	285	RFr.
LG	57	Jacob Hickman*	6-4	285	So.
	68	Keith Williams	6-5	310	RFr.
C	59	Brett Byford*	6-3	300	Sr.
	57	Jacob Hickman*	6-4	285	So.
RG	61	Mike Huff**	6-4	300	Jr.
	73	D.J. Jones	6-5	310	RFr.
RT	72	Jaivorio Burkes	6-5	315	Fr.
	65	Mike Smith	6-6	285	RFr.
HB	86	Sean Hill	6-3	250	Sr.
	85	J.B. Phillips***	6-3	245	Sr.
WR	83	Terrence Nunn***	6-0	190	Sr.
	7	Frantz Hardy**	6-1	190	Sr.
QB	12	Joe Ganz*	6-1	200	Jr.
	2	Patrick Witt	6-4	220	Fr.
FB	36	Thomas Lawson*	6-0	240	Jr.
	48	Andy Sand	6-2	230	Sr.
IB	5	Marlon Lucky**	6-0	210	Jr.
	19	Quentin Castille	6-1	245	Fr.
PK	90	Alex Henery	6-2	170	RFr.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

DE	99	Barry Turner**	6-3	270	Jr.
	88	Clayton Sievers**	6-4	245	Jr.
NT	93	Ndamukong Suh*	6-4	305	So.
	56	Shukree Barfield	6-4	310	Jr.
DT	43	Ty Steinkuhler**	6-3	285	Jr.
	97	Kevin Dixon	6-3	295	Jr.
DE	98	Zach Potter**	6-7	280	Jr.
	95	Pierre Allen	6-5	265	RFr.
SLB	51	Bo Ruud***	6-3	235	Sr.
	53	Tyler Wortman	6-3	230	Jr.
MLB	13	Corey McKeon**	6-1	225	Sr.
	52	Phillip Dillard*	6-1	250	So.
WLB	15	Steve Octavien*	6-0	240	Sr.
	6	Major Culbert*	6-0	210	So.
LCB	5	Armando Murillo	6-0	195	Jr.
	25	Andre Jones*	6-0	190	Sr.
FS	30	Tierre Green***	6-1	200	Sr.
	3	Rickey Thenarse*	6-0	190	So.
SS	4	Larry Asante	6-1	210	So.
	9	Bryan Wilson*	6-1	205	Sr.
RCB	1	Zack Bowman*	6-2	200	Sr.
	2	Cortney Grixby***	5-9	170	Sr.
P	97	Dan Titchener*	6-0	200	Jr.

KANSAS STATE OFFENSE

WR	27	Jordy Nelson*	6-2	213	Sr.
	7	Lamar Brown	6-3	229	Fr.
WR	5	Ernie Pierce	6-3	209	Jr.
	83	Daniel Gonzalez*	6-3	218	Sr.
LT	78	Alesana Alesana	6-3	299	Jr.
	72	Kaleb Drinkgern	6-6	260	Fr.
LG	65	Logan Robinson*	6-8	318	Sr.
	76	Brock Unruh*	6-5	301	So.
C	54	Trevor Viers	6-5	270	So.
	59	Zach Kendall	6-3	285	RFr.
RG	73	Gerald Spexarth**	6-6	280	Jr.
	65	Logan Robinson*	6-8	318	Sr.
RT	63	Penisimi Liu	6-5	308	Jr.
	64	Nick Stringer*	6-6	270	So.
TE	85	Jaron Mastrud*	6-6	259	So.
	80	Brett Alstatt**	6-4	224	Jr.
WR	87	Deon Murphy	5-10	170	Jr.
	88	Cedric Wilson*	6-0	181	Jr.
QB	1	Josh Freeman*	6-5	250	So.
	14	Carson Coffman	6-3	200	RFr.
RB	8	James Johnson*	5-11	200	Sr.
	9	Leon Patton*	5-7	187	So.
PK	16	Brooks Rossman	6-0	178	Jr.

KANSAS STATE DEFENSE

LE	96	Moses Manu*	6-2	260	Sr.
	97	Chidubamu Abana	6-5	280	Jr.
NT	99	Steven Cline**	6-2	296	Sr.
	92	Brandon Balkcom*	6-0	266	Jr.
RE	95	Rob Jackson*	6-4	259	Sr.
	91	Clayton Cox	6-3	236	Sr.
SLB	98	Ian Campbell**	6-4	249	Jr.
	10	Chris Patterson	6-2	206	Jr.
MLB	53	Reggie Walker**	6-1	231	Jr.
	39	John Houlik*	5-11	217	So.
MLB	51	Justin Roland*	6-0	245	Sr.
	37	Marcus Perry***	6-1	230	Sr.
WLB	90	Eric Childs*	6-3	227	So.
	42	Ross Diehl*	6-2	215	So.
CB	22	Justin McKinney**	5-9	191	Sr.
	3	Bryan Baldwin**	5-10	192	Sr.
FS	2	Marcus Watts***	6-1	189	Sr.
	30	Chris Carney*	6-1	190	So.
SS	21	Gary Chandler	5-11	190	Jr.
	20	Courtney Herndon*	5-11	204	So.
CB	6	Byron Garvin***	5-9	191	Sr.
	23	Ray Cheatham*	6-0	190	Jr.
P	17	Tim Reyer***	5-11	201	Sr.

THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION

NEBRASKA vs.

KANSAS STATE



NOVEMBER 10, 2007
HUSKERS AND 'CATS ARE ON A COLLISION COURSE
IN THIS BATTLE OF WOUNDED BIG 12 ALSO-RANS!

Picks

Nov.
10



Brian Hill
Editor



Mike Babcock
Cont. Editor



Terry Douglass
G.I. Independent



Sean Callahan
KFAB/Rivals.com



Ross Jernstrom
WOWT-Omaha
(Guest)

Kansas State
@Nebraska

Kansas St. 37,
Nebraska 34

Nebraska 27,
Kansas St. 24

Kansas St. 41,
Nebraska 24

Nebraska 27,
Kansas St. 24

Nebraska 35,
Kansas St. 28

Colorado
@Iowa State

Iowa State 24,
Colorado 23

Colorado 21,
Iowa State 15

Colorado 17,
Iowa State 13

Colorado 31,
Iowa State 17

Iowa State 21,
Colorado 18

Kansas
@Oklahoma State

Kansas 34,
Okl. St. 31

Okl. St. 28,
Kansas 27

Okl. St. 34,
Kansas 27

Kansas 41,
Okl. St. 38

Okl. St. 49,
Kansas 42

Michigan
@Wisconsin

Michigan 20,
Wisconsin 17

Wisconsin 28,
Michigan 24

Michigan 13,
Wisconsin 10

Michigan 24,
Wisconsin 20

Michigan 24,
Wisconsin 21

Last Week
Season

1-3
21-19

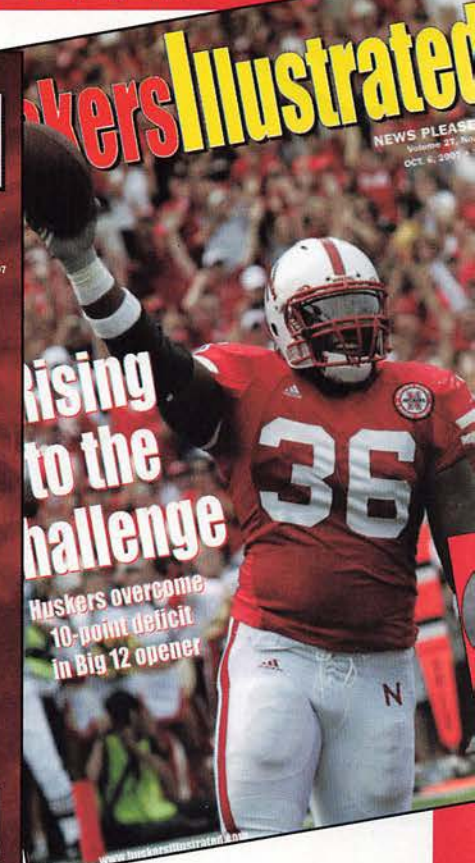
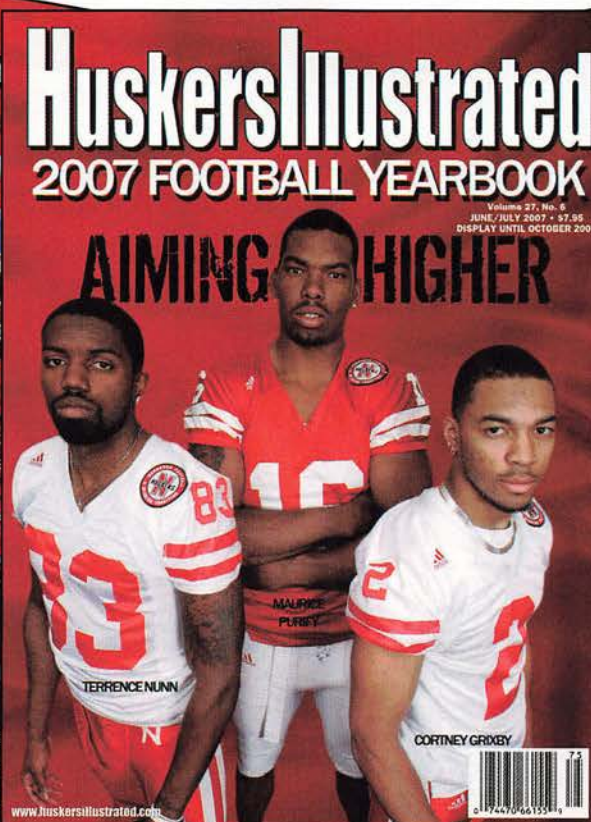
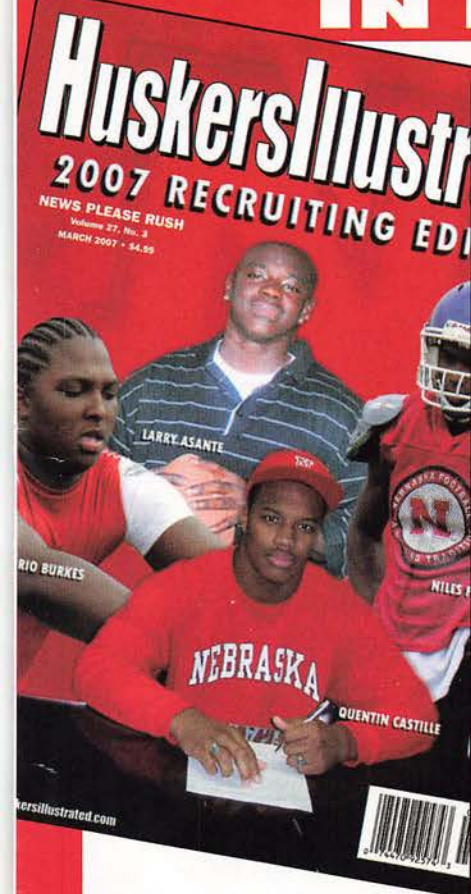
3-1
26-14

3-1
27-13

3-1
29-11

3-1
25-15

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... All The Time

NEBRASKA'S



Nebraska's seniors will be making their final Memorial Stadium appearance when the Huskers play host to Kansas State Nov. 10. Pictured (front row, from left) Corey McKeon (13), Maurice Purify (16), Bryan Wilson (9), Tyler Kester (19), Ben Eisenhart (46), Dan Erickson (26), coach Bill Callahan, Terre Green (30), Terrence Nunn (83), Cortney Grixby (2), Andre Jones (25), Lance Brandenburgh (40). (Back row, from left) Brett Byford (59), Andy Poulosky (86), Carl Nicks (77), Sam Keller (9), Steve Octavien (15), Brandon Johnson (96), Thomas Rice (85), Victory Haines (75), Tony Sullivan (84), Matt Senske (42), J.B. Phillips (85), Bo Ruud (51), Andy Sand (48), Zackary Bowman (1), Josh Mueller (81), Sean Hill (86), Jordan Picou (69). Sullivan has left the team. Another of this year's seniors, Kevin Luhrs, is now a student volunteer coach, after injuries ended his career. (PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN)

2007 SENIORS



Trying to Adjust

*Veteran players helping
Husker freshman Mueller
through the rough spots*

By Bob Hamar

It was a normal October morning in Nebraska a couple of weeks ago, but Tara Mueller was cold.

No, she was colder than that. Mueller was wearing a rather heavy sweatshirt, but she was still freezing.

"I've got another long-sleeved shirt under this," Mueller said.

Mueller, a freshman from Scottsdale, Ariz., isn't used to cool fall weather. That's not the only adjustment Mueller has had to make as a freshman on the Nebraska volleyball team.

"Everything is different," Mueller said. "Classes are different, coaching style, learning all the new things, and obviously the wind. All that stuff is new to me. I'm trying to adjust as much as I can."

That adjustment has been eased by the presence of All-American out-

side hitters Christina Houghtelling and Jordan Larson.

"Everyone is really a role model for me," Mueller said. "But Jordan and Chris can do everything. They can play defense, they can set, they can hit, they have all the shots. It's just amazing playing with them."

"From the beginning, everything was new. I've just been trying to follow Jordan and Chris and watch what they're doing. They have really helped me out a lot. They have really helped me with defense and hitting different shots."

Mueller hasn't seen a lot of playing time behind Larson and Houghtelling, but Nebraska coach John Cook said she has played well when given the opportunity.

"The times she's been in matches, she has performed very well," Cook said. "She has met the expectations we've had for her. She's playing

behind two first-team All-American left sides, so she's getting some great training and has great role models to follow.

"I think in the future it's going to pay big dividends for her as a player and for our program, especially next year."

Cook has seen Mueller's improvement as the season has gone along. He also likes the enthusiasm she brings to the court. Cook calls her "lightning bug" because of that intensity.

"She's not as big as a Houghtelling," Cook said. "She's closer in size to Jordan, but she has a great vertical jump. She's a very quick athlete. I've seen a very good adjustment from her to the college game."

Mueller's versatility is one of her strengths. She has played rightside, outside and even got a surprise start at libero early this season.

Mueller is not likely to see much time at libero the remainder of her career. Outside hitter is where she will make her mark at Nebraska.

Scott Bruhn





Freshman Tara Mueller has shown her versatility, playing rightside, outside and making one start at libero.

"We put her at libero, but the ideal thing is for you to have an outside hitters who can pass or have the skills to be a libero. That's a great combination to have," Cook said. "That's what we're trying to do with our outside hitters so we have players playing all the way around."

"Like Missouri for example or Iowa State, they're subbing their outside hitters out. To me your outside hitters are really the ones who determine if you win or lose matches when it gets tight. They're going to make the big swings. For us passing and playing defense, making great serves. You want great athletes at that position and Tara fits that mold."

Mueller may have all the tools, but there is still that period of adjustment to the college game. The first few practices were tough for her, even with role models like Houghtelling and Larson. The college game is another step up from the high-level club volleyball Mueller played in

high school.

When you play for one of the top volleyball teams in the country with some of the best players in the country, practices can be hard.

"It's really hard because our team is at such a high level, the freshmen are trying to live up to that level," Cook said. "When they don't, it really stands out. If they have a bad day, it really stands out, so there's a lot of pressure on those guys."

Mueller said the veteran players helped her through the rough periods.

"It started out kind of rough," Mueller said. "There were practices where I was so lost. I was freaking out because I didn't know what to do. But everyone is so supportive. Everyone knows. They've all been there, and they all help you out with what you need to know and where you need to be."

"I'm so used to high school and club where you can just hit around

the block. Basically just play your game. Here it's so strategic. You have to use the block. Everything is so different."

The Huskers have lost a couple of outside hitters in the past few years, including Brooke Bartek who is now starting at Kentucky. That makes Mueller an important player for the future of Husker volleyball.

"We're not real deep at outside hitter, and we're trying to recruit more," Cook said. "(Them) leaving gave us a bit of a hole, so Tara becomes a huge recruit at that position, especially going into next year." ■

Bob Hamar covers the Nebraska volleyball team for the *Grand Island (Neb.) Independent*. He can be reached at bob.hamar@theindependent.com

RESULTS, SCHEDULE

AVCA Showcase

At Qwest Center Omaha

Aug. 24	vs. Tennessee	W 3-0
Aug. 25	vs. UCLA	W 3-1

Holiday Inn Classic

NU Coliseum/Qwest Center Omaha

Aug. 31	vs. Creighton (NU)	W 3-0
Sept. 2	vs. Penn St. (Omaha)	W 3-0
Sept. 3	vs. Cal Poly (NU)	W 3-0

Ameritas Players Challenge

NU Coliseum

Sept. 7	vs. Duke	W 3-0
Sept. 8	vs. New Mexico St.	W 3-0

(Home matches at NU Coliseum, unless noted)

Sept. 12	Texas	W 3-0
Sept. 15	@Texas Tech	W 3-0
Sept. 22	Texas A&M	W 3-0
Sept. 26	@Kansas	W 3-0
Sept. 29	Baylor	W 3-0
Oct. 3	Kansas State	W 3-0
Oct. 6	@Colorado	W 3-0
Oct. 10	Iowa State	W 3-0
Oct. 13	@Oklahoma	W 3-0
Oct. 17	@Missouri	W 3-0
Oct. 20	Kansas	W 3-0
Oct. 21	Hawaii (Devaney)	W 3-0
Oct. 24	@Texas	L 3-0
Oct. 31	Missouri	W 3-2
Nov. 3	@Kansas State	7 p.m.
Nov. 7	Colorado	7 p.m.
Nov. 11	@Iowa State	4 p.m.
Nov. 14	@Texas A&M	5:30 p.m.
Nov. 17	Oklahoma	7 p.m.
Nov. 21	@Baylor	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 24	Texas Tech	7 p.m.

Nov. 29-Dec. 2

NCAA First/Second Rounds At Campus Sites

Dec. 7-8

NCAA Regionals At Campus Sites

Dec 13-15

NCAA Final Four At Sacramento, Calif.

Center of Attention

NU senior doesn't like being the focus, but it's unavoidable

By Mike Babcock

The question often is asked of athletes finishing careers, enough so to become a cliché: How do you want to be remembered? Aleks Maric reflected before answering.

This season will be the end of the collegiate phase of his basketball career. He's a senior, the only one on coach Doc Sadler's second Nebraska team. And when he's finished, with a communications study degree in hand next May, he'll be moving on, almost certainly to the professional phase.

There are no guarantees, of course. But Maric will have the resume and the size. And if, for some reason, he isn't playing in the NBA a year from now, he'll probably be playing in Europe.

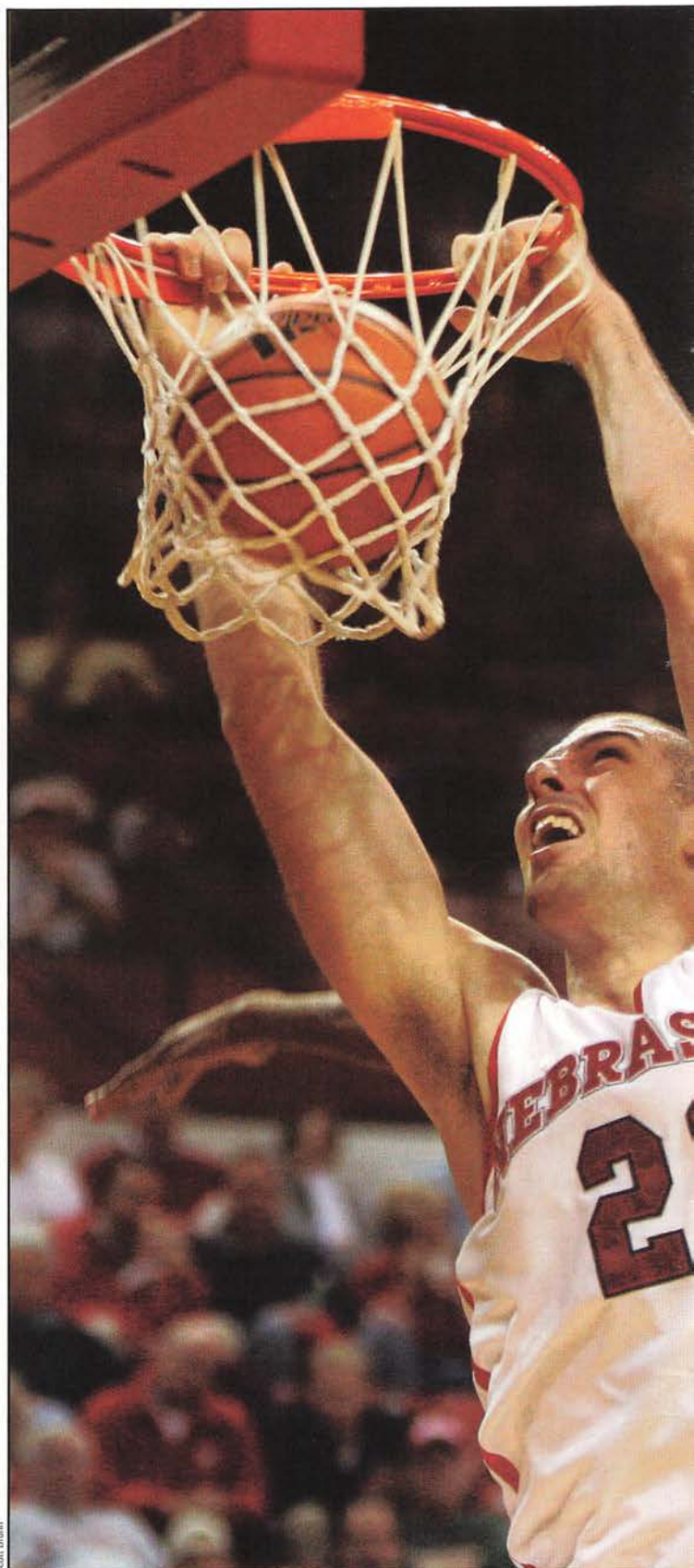
Playing basketball is what he does. Playing basketball is what he loves.

So anyway, he was asked how he would like to be remembered by those who have watched him develop into the Big 12's best center. Former Cornhusker Dave Hoppen, the standard for Nebraska centers, recently described him as that, "by far," in an interview with the Omaha World-Herald.

Being remembered that way would be nice, of course. But Maric answered outside a basketball context. "Nothing bad, obviously," he said (as if that were possible), "just a down-to-earth person, never let anything go to his head, worked hard, respected everybody and everybody respected him."

"I'm a human being, and so are you. It doesn't matter if you're 6-years-old or 60-years-old; I'm going to respect you. And I want the same respect back. I tell people, 'If you treat me right, I'm going to treat you twice as better,' because that, to me, goes a long way."

Though "twice as better" might seem an awkward con-



Last season as a junior, Nebraska center Aleks Maric averaged 18.5 points and 8.7 rebounds — and shot a Big 12-best 56.5 percent from the field.

struction, its meaning is clear. Basketball is his passion. Again, it's what he does. And he does it exceedingly well. But it's not who he is.



"I love playing the game and doing things right," he said. "But I do not like attention."

That is unavoidable, however, and not just because he's 6-foot-11 and 275 pounds, with an Australian accent. He

has scored and rebounded with the best ever to wear a Nebraska jersey.

His picture dominates the cover of the 2007-08 media guide. And though the Cornhuskers should have more scoring threats, the offense still needs to go through him, as it did last season, when he averaged 18.5 points and 8.7 rebounds — and shot a Big 12-best 56.5 percent from the field.

He won't seek attention. But it will find him easily enough.

Nebraska fans "love success," said Maric. "And when there's success, they amplify it."

They amplify it regardless of the sport, and focus on those who are instrumental in achieving it. "That's fair enough. I've got nothing against that," he said. "I love playing for Nebraska. I love everybody that supports this program. I think it's just the Australian way, if you want to call it (that)."

"I mean, you do what you've got to do, and that's how it is. You don't sit back and enjoy success. You just keep doing it because you love it. That's how we Aussies are."

Not sitting back and enjoying success doesn't mean not having fun, however.

"I love college life; I'm not going to lie. I love everything about it. I love being young. I'm going to be, hopefully, still alive when I'm 40, 50. I'm still going to act like a kid. I'm going to do practical jokes. I'm going to be the biggest kid ever. I love doing that. Life is too short. Life is too serious. You've got to have fun," Maric said. "If you don't have fun now, when are you going to have fun?"

Basketball might be his passion, but it also might make him wealthy in the not-too-distant future. "It could be," he said. "But if you think about stuff like that, it could get to your head."

Success isn't likely to get to his head. Before he left Australia, his father sat him down and told him his first concern should be getting an education, and his second should be working hard.

You never know what will happen, his dad said, but if you work hard in the classroom, as well as on the court, you'll always have an education as a back-up in case basketball doesn't work out.

"People ask me today as a senior,

'What are your plans for next year?' I tell them my goal and passion that I've been chasing for a long time is playing professional basketball, whether it be here in America or overseas," said Maric. "But if that doesn't work out, I've always got a job waiting for me back home."

He has come a long way since a freshman season in which he started 10 games, including five in conference play, and averaged 8 points and 6.3 rebounds. The averages increased to 10.9 points and 8.1 rebounds as a sophomore, though "I think in my early years I was too mechanical," he said.

"I didn't let the game just flow. Now, I think I've become more of a player. I've become smoother, less hesitant. I can read the game. I think my basketball IQ has grown."

He is only the second player in school history to score 1,000 points and pull down 600 rebounds before the end of his junior season. Hoppen was the first to reach those totals.

And if he averages what he did last season, he will move up to fifth on Nebraska's career-scoring list and second on the career-rebounding list. The latter is a certainty, barring something unforeseen. He needs only 103 rebounds to climb to second, behind Venson Hamilton (1996-99).

Maric goes into the season at No. 9 in career rebounds, with 680.

He has achieved such numbers by practicing and playing as if he were No. 2, trying to be No. 1. "That's always been my philosophy," he said. "You always want more. I don't see my game being perfect in any area or being established in any area. I always want to improve."

That's how he wants to be remembered, as someone who earns respect through hard work and returns that respect two-fold. But his senior season is about to begin, and he will do many more things for which he will be remembered, even though the attention will make him uncomfortable.

"It's gone by so quick," Maric said. "I remember people saying, 'You have four years of college. They're going to go by so quick, so just enjoy them, have a good time. Being younger, I said, 'Yeh, right. Four years of school, who really wants to do that?' But hey, it's flown by. It's flown by." ■



Kirsten Weiss earned NRA first-team All-America honors in addition to her NCAA individual runner-up finish in smallbore in 2006.

Aiming Higher

Rifle has taken Nebraska senior Weiss places she never thought she would go

By KATELYN KERKHOVE

When Kirsten Weiss was 12-years-old, she went hunting with her dad for the first time near Cornwall, Pa.

She remembers creeping up on a group of wild turkeys very slowly, quietly. Her dad told her they would most likely fly away, but it was worth

a try. As she crept, Weiss held tightly to her shotgun, Crouching down, she aimed and shot.

Instead of killing a turkey, however, she went flying backward, head over heels.

"The turkeys, instead of flying off, just looked at me and moseyed off into the woods," Weiss said.

Now, in her senior year at

Nebraska, Weiss said she has never shot a turkey or a pheasant or a deer. But it's not for a lack of talent. A smallbore and air rifle shooter for the Cornhuskers, Weiss has racked up several intercollegiate honors.

Since coming to Nebraska in 2004, Weiss has been named a 2007 NRA First-Team All-American in smallbore, the 2006 junior prone national champion, and a member of the USA Shooting National Development Team from 2005 to 2007.

This year, she will lead the Huskers as the only returner who has qualified for individual finals at the NCAA championship tournament.

"I think she brings a lot of experience in the fact that she's dealt with

high pressure situations," Huskers first-year coach Morgan Hicks said. "I think a lot of the underclassmen will look to her to see how she reacts in tough situations, and I think they'll see she's a person that can handle and perform in extreme situations."

Weiss didn't start her rifle career until her sophomore year of high school. Before and after her interest began, she was active in theater, sports including basketball, volleyball and softball, and studying different languages.

She's not fluent, but working toward it in German, Spanish and Thai. She learned Thai for a mission trip to Thailand, where she helped teach English.

While she has enjoyed shooting since she started, she said her choice to continue it in college was a difficult one. Once she realized she couldn't imagine not shooting competitively, however, Nebraska was her first choice.

"I looked at a bunch of other schools that didn't have rifle," Weiss said. "I didn't know if I was going to do it or not, but I couldn't just drop it, so I was like Nebraska, that's where I

want to go."

But her best experiences have not come just as a Husker. She was the top member of the USA Junior National Team in 2006. She traveled to Croatia for the ISSF World Championships, where she took 19th in the three-position event — standing, kneeling and lying down.

She also visited England the summer before her freshman year of college, staying for nine days to compete in a junior international tournament. She took the gold in the smallbore competition.

"She has tons of experience," Hicks said. "She knows what it takes to perform at that level. I think no matter if she competes at that level or college, she'll give it 100 percent. The rest of the team sees that, and they realize if she can do it, we can do it."

"Also, she just knows how to juggle everything. She can have a life and still compete at that level."

Weiss has been helped most by her dad, she said. A hunter at heart, her dad has taken her on three African safaris.

While she has yet to shoot a turkey or deer, her first kill was a zebra.

"I really liked meeting the people and experiencing the Africa that a lot of people don't get to experience," Weiss said. "These are the graphic safaris. These are where you drive four hours over rocky terrain, and you stay in an open hut, where birds fly through and bugs are everywhere."

"The people there don't have a lot, but we've met so many nice people over there. The native Africans are ecstatic when an animal is shot because they are so protein starved, and they get the meat."

With all of her experiences at home and abroad, rifle has taken Weiss places she never thought she would go.

Now, entering her last year of competition as a Husker, she said she hopes to start reaching her potential. While Nebraska lost its first two competitions against Kentucky and Alaska-Fairbanks, Weiss's goals include an NCAA tournament bid and a title for her team as well as an individual title.

"A lot of times in practice, I shoot a lot higher scores," Weiss said. "If I can do that in competition, I could be an amazing shooter for my team." ■



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A Short Career

The record will show that Sam Keller completed 205-of-325 passes for 2,422 yards and 14 touchdowns with 10 interceptions during his career at Nebraska.

It will show that he played in nine games, all of them as a starter.

What it won't show, what it can't really, is that he gave everything he had to his adopted program, in leadership as well as in effort. And he did so with unshakable optimism, without complaint.

Despite the team's struggles, as the defense dug holes from which he tried to climb and pull the offense with him, he always accommodated reporters, granting every interview request except those following the Texas game — when he sought only the solace of family.

Keller talked to teammates before leaving the locker room, of course.

He was the consummate teammate, by all accounts, arriving at Nebraska from Arizona State, where he spent his first three seasons, in August of 2006. He deferred to his new teammates. He played on the scout team and earned their respect, slowly and substantially.

"He said it didn't look good," Joe Ganz recalled the Tuesday after the Texas game. "He said that it hurt, and he thought it was broken. But he didn't really know for sure."

It was his collarbone, on the left side. And it was broken.

Ganz found out on Sunday. But "I kind of had a feeling Saturday, just kind of by the way his demeanor was after it happened. He was kind of down," said Ganz.

"So I kind of just assumed that it would be me the next three games."

One person's misfortune is another's opportunity. "You don't want Sam to get hurt," Ganz said. "That's not how I wanted it to happen. But it happened. That's the way it happened."

The team had to move on without Keller. One player goes down, another steps in.

"Just visiting with him, you could see that in his face and you could feel his emotion. He wants to help this football team," Callahan said. "He's been great. He's a classy kid, and he's a competitor. He's a stand-up guy. He's a guy's guy. And that's the best compliment I could give to Sam Keller."

"He's going to do well in his future, and



Sam Keller passed for 2,442 yards in his nine games at Nebraska.

we're very appreciative of all of his efforts, what he did this year. I think he would have had a chance to do some things positively in terms of records and all that stuff. But I think if you'd ask him, he'd rather win a game than all those other things."

Keller's Cornhusker career is finished. But his goal is to play in the NFL, and "I think he's got an outstanding shot to do some things," said Callahan. "Now where they pick him, draft him, select him, that's up to a club's needs. But I think he's got a great opportunity to continue to develop and be a pro quarterback in the National Football League. I think he's got that type of talent."

"And he's got the arm to do that . . . he'll make a fine quarterback for somebody."

That the injury is to his non-throwing shoulder is a "real positive," said Callahan.

NOT JUST SAM

Keller's injury drew most of the attention following the Texas game. But linebacker Lance Brandenburg suffered a season-ending shoulder injury as well.

Brandenburg also is a senior. So his Cornhusker career is over as well.

Because of the defensive struggles this season, Brandenburg's contributions the past four seasons might be overlooked. He played as a true freshman on special teams then became the No. 2 weakside linebacker as a sophomore, after missing four of the first five games with a leg injury.

He was credited with six tackles in the Alamo Bowl victory against Michigan.

Brandenburg could play any of the three linebacker positions and was in the regular rotation last season. He started four games this season and ranked fourth on the team with 51 tackles.

Brandenburg earned first-team academic all-conference recognition the past two seasons, and he has been on the Big 12 Commissioner's Honor Roll every semester, majoring in business administration/pre-optometry. His cumulative grade-point average is 3.421. His future is secure.

With his loss and uncertainty regarding the status of Bo Ruud and Blake Lawrence, defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove had to shuffle linebackers the week of the Kansas game.

Tyler Wortman, a junior walk-on from Grand Island, Neb., moved up at strongside linebacker, with true freshman Latravis Washington behind him, while sophomore Major Culbert moved behind senior Steve Octavien as the top back-up at weakside linebacker.

"We have some young players that we're going to have to groom and get ready," Callahan said.

One person's misfortune is another's opportunity.



Lance Brandenburg started four games this year.

Quick Hits

WATCH LISTS

Nebraska senior center Aleks Maric was named to watch lists for the John R. Wooden Award and the Naismith Trophy. Both lists include 50 of the nation's top collegiate players.

The Wooden Award is sponsored by The Los Angeles Athletic Club, while the Naismith Trophy is presented by the Atlanta Tipoff Club. Others from the Big 12 on either or both of the lists include: Darrell Arthur (Kansas), D.J. Augustin (Texas), Mario Chalmers (Kansas), Brandon Rush (Kansas), Joseph Jones (Texas A&M) and Martin Zeno (Texas Tech).

University of Texas freshman Kevin Durant won both awards last season. Neither had ever been won by a freshman. Durant is now a rookie with the NBA's Seattle SuperSonics.

ALL GOOD THINGS

Fifth-ranked Texas snapped the Husker volleyball team's 29-match winning streak with a 30-22, 30-25, 30-20 victory on Oct. 24 in Austin. Nebraska was ranked No. 1 at the time. The Longhorns moved into a tie with the Huskers at the top of the Big 12 standings.

Nebraska swept the first meeting between the teams in Lincoln on Sept. 12.

Destinee Hooker and Juliann Faucette combined for 30 kills as Texas became the first Big 12 team to sweep the Huskers since Texas accomplished the feat in 1997.

Nebraska, the nation's last unbeaten team, lost for the first time since Nov. 11, 2006, at Colorado, a span of 30 matches. Since then, the Huskers had dropped only six games, none in the last 17 matches.

NO. 1 NO LONGER

The week after the Texas loss, Nebraska dropped from the top spot in the CSTV coaches' rankings. The Huskers had been ranked No. 1 for 93 consecutive matches. Penn State, which Nebraska swept early in the season, moved to No. 1, with 26 first-place votes. The Huskers received 25 first-place votes.

Texas moved up to No. 3 in the rankings. Washington (four first-place votes), Stanford, Southern California, Wisconsin, California, UCLA and Florida rounded out the top 10.

INDIVIDUAL CHAMP

Nebraska's JC Stevenson, a sophomore from Grand Island, Neb., sank a birdie putt on her final hole to finish with the low individual score in leading the Huskers to a second-place finish at the 20-team Edwin Watts/Palmetto Invitational at Kiawah Island, S.C., in late October.

The tournament wrapped up the women's golf team's fall competition.

Stevenson finished one shot ahead of Kansas State's Michelle Regan, with a 54-hole score of 216. Prior to the final day of competition, Stevenson had never finished under par in a collegiate round. She shot a pair of 2-under-par 70s on the final day. "I had been telling people I was cursed because I had shot 72 so many times," she said. The key was breaking through "that mental barrier."

After that, "I was able to just relax and go out and play," she said.

The Huskers, who began the day tied for fourth at 13 shots back, had a combined 294 on the final 18 holes. But that wasn't good enough to overtake East Carolina, which won by three strokes.

Senior Allison Stewart finished in a tie for 14th with a 229 total, while senior Elli Brown was one stroke behind her teammate, at 230. The other Huskers competing in the tournament were sophomore Charlotte Wendner (238) and freshman Mary Kate Bird (239).



JC Stevenson

Three weeks earlier, the Huskers were repeat winners at the Bronco Invitational in Kuna, Idaho. Stewart shared the individual title with Kansas State's Regan.

CROSS COUNTRY

Freshman Lara Crofford and junior Ari Goldstein earn All-Big 12 recognition in leading the No. 30-ranked Husker women's cross country team to third place at the conference championships in Lubbock, Texas, in late October. The Husker men finished 10th. Colorado swept the team titles.



Lara Crofford

Crofford finished ninth in 20:59. Goldstein finished 14th in 21:23 to become the first Husker woman to earn all-conference honors twice since the Big 12's inception in 1996.

Peter van der Westhuizen paced the Husker men, finishing 23rd in 25:33.

The other Husker women competitors were: Natalja Zarcenko (20th, 21:41), Rachel Carizales (23rd, 21:50) and

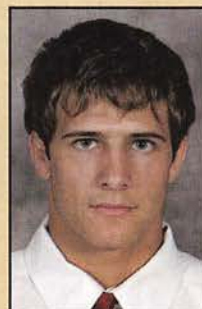
Jennifer Pancoast (32nd, 22:06). All three are juniors.

The other men's finishers were: freshman Todd Gulizia (38th, 26:01), junior Kyle Custer (47th, 26:22), freshman Mikel Thomas (60th, 26:45) and freshman Peter Falcon (62nd, 26:49). Despite the 10th-place finish, the men's team has "closed the gap a lot on the teams ahead of us," coach Jay Dirksen said.

ALL-STAR CLASSIC

Cornhusker junior Paul Donahoe has been selected to compete in the 42nd annual National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) All-Star Classic in Eugene, Ore., on Nov. 19. Donahoe, ranked No. 1 at 125 pounds by Intermat, will wrestle No. 4-ranked Jayson Ness, a sophomore at Minnesota.

Donahoe is the first Husker to compete in the All-Star Classic since 2004, when Jacob Klein wrestled at 174 pounds. Donahoe will be attempting to become the first Nebraska wrestler to win back-to-back NCAA championships this season. He had a 35-5 record last season.



Paul Donahoe

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Nebraska led the Big 12 in exhausted eligibility rates for a fifth consecutive year, according to federal graduation rates released by the NCAA in late October. Its exhausted eligibility rate was 94 percent for a second consecutive year, two points higher than Texas Tech, which was second.

Nebraska's exhausted eligibility rate includes members of incoming classes from 1991-92 through 2000-01. During that time, 415 of 443 scholarship student-athletes who completed their eligibility earned undergraduate degrees. The national average for Division I schools was 86 percent.

The rest of the conference: Baylor and Iowa State (91%), Kansas and Missouri (88%), Texas (87%), Colorado and Texas A&M (85%), Oklahoma (82%), Oklahoma State (81%).

FOUR IS ENOUGH

There's a pattern here, and it needs to be broken. Texas running back Jamaal Charles was named the Big 12 Offensive Player of the Week for football after rushing for 290 yards and three touchdowns in a 28-25 victory against the Cornhuskers. Charles was the fourth consecutive Nebraska opponent to be named conference offensive player of the week, following quarterback Stephen McGee of Texas A&M, running back Dantrell Savage of Oklahoma State and quarterback Chase Daniel of Missouri. ■

CROSSWORD

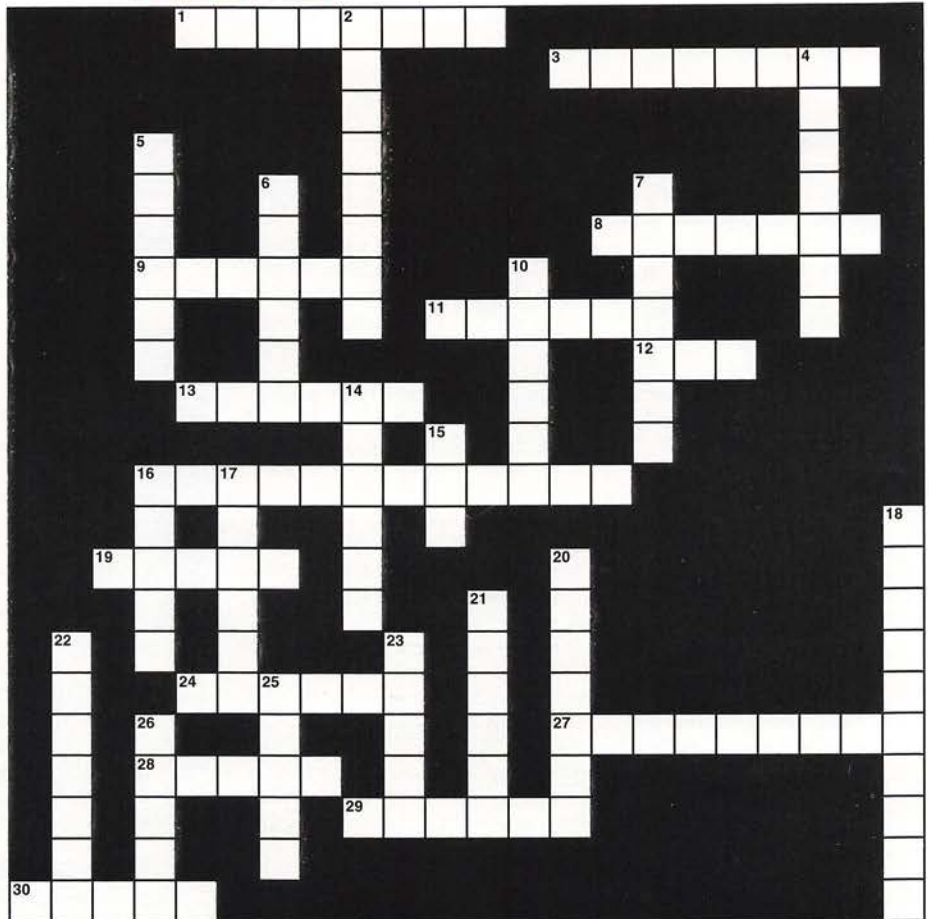
ACROSS

- 1 Kansas State nickname
- 3 Had sack vs. Texas
- 8 Turner Gill's current school
- 9 Kansas State head coach
- 11 2001 All-America guard
- 12 Bo Pelini's current school
- 13 Single-season passing leader
- 16 Injured linebacker
- 19 Wore retired No. 60
- 24 Injured quarterback
- 27 Kansas State campus location
- 28 Holder for place-kicks
- 29 Kansas State wide receiver
- 30 Defensive line coach

DOWN

- 2 2007 first-round draft pick
- 4 Kickoff specialist
- 5 Kansas State color
- 6 Place-kicker
- 7 Wears No. 5 (defense)
- 10 Former Kansas State head coach
- 14 Long-snapper
- 15 Network for NU-Colorado telecast
- 16 NU's most recent addition to Pro Football Hall of Fame
- 17 Leading tackler vs. Texas
- 18 2005 first-round draft pick
- 20 Kansas State quarterback
- 21 Network for NU-Kansas State telecast
- 22 Head strength coach
- 23 2002 All-America kick returner
- 25 Wears No. 5 (offense)
- 26 Scored 2 touchdowns vs. Texas

Answers in Nov. 23 issue



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NOV. 3 CROSSWORD SOLUTION



10 YEARS AGO . . .

Huskers Illustrated looks back at some of the top stories of 1997

**Nov. 28, 1997:
Volume 17, No. 17**

STATE OF THE HUSKERS: VOTING FOR FROST SHOULD BE A NO-BRAINER

It's not hard to figure out who is the conference's best quarterback.

IN THE COMPANY OF GREATNESS

Ahman Green has made the most of his junior season, jumping from No. 17 to No. 2 on the school's all-time rushing list. If he returns next season, Mike Rozier's coveted record also could be in jeopardy.

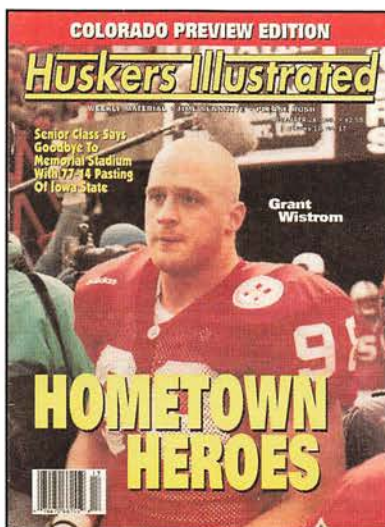
DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY

Terry Pettit came up with a simple cure-all when morale started to drop in his locker room during a late-season skid: play with joy, not fear.

FIRST-HALF SCORING BARRAGE DOOMS CYCLONES, 77-14

Grant Wistrom was the last to visit the interview room on the lower level of the South Stadium. By the time he arrived, some reporters had already left to begin filing stories.

The All-America rush end seemed composed. But powerful emotions were just beneath the surface. That was



apparent when he spoke. "I'm not going to lie," Wistrom said.

"It was really tough trying to choke everything back. But we still had a ballgame to play. So it was probably harder after the game than before."

The "it" to which he referred was playing at Memorial Stadium for the final time.

"I just tried to soak everything in one last time," he said. "One last tunnel walk, one last time walking out in front of the fans, getting introduced, giving Coach (Tom) Osborne a hug and just saying, 'Thanks for everything you've ever done for me,' just hearing the roar of the crowd one more time."

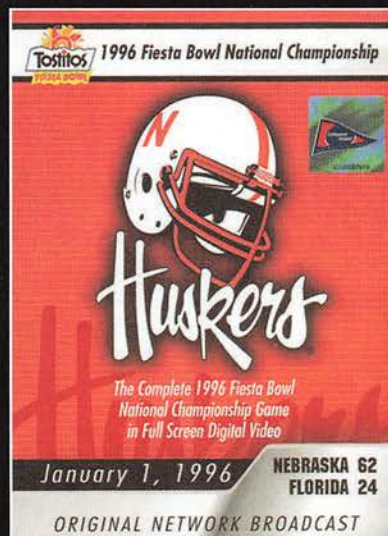
"There will certainly be some things that will be tough to let go of."

Wistrom was among 23 Nebraska seniors for whom the Iowa State game was the last at Memorial Stadium. It was special for each player, but maybe more so for Wistrom, who could have left a year ago. He decided against submitting his name for the NFL draft to play one more season.

"We've won a lot of football games here, and if I could do it all over again, I wouldn't be wearing any other color but the red and white," Wistrom said. "I'm enjoying what I do. I love the guys I'm playing with. Football . . . it just doesn't get any more fun. It's special playing at home here."

The fans, of which there were 75,613 despite a sub-zero wind-chill on this particular afternoon, make Memorial Stadium "the greatest place in America to play football," Wistrom said . . . ■

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Mild By Comparison

Cornhusker fans couldn't have envisioned anything much worse than 40-15 loss in 2005



**Mike
BABCOCK**

A FAN DRESSED IN RED leaned over the edge of the stadium above the entrance to the visitors' locker room and yelled down to a solitary figure, waiting for the Nebraska football team to pass by.

"Hey, Tom, thanks for coming back."

Tom Osborne acknowledged the fan.

Soon after, he entered the locker room. His visit was brief.

If there was any reason for optimism in Lawrence, Kan., it was that Osborne is the Cornhuskers' interim athletic director. But even his presence did little to diminish what had transpired.

Nebraska has been represented by a football team since 1890. Never had it allowed as many points as it did on this otherwise pleasant afternoon. Kansas scored 76 — as in 11 touchdowns and 10 extra-point kicks.

The total seared the soul of Cornhusker fans. There are other ways to describe it. But that will do.

Nebraska scored 39 points and lost, to a program it once dominated, in a series that is tied for the third-longest in NCAA Division I-A history. The series has been continuous since 1906. The Cornhuskers hold a commanding advantage in the series, 88-23-3. And they have lost only eight times in Lawrence.

They defeated Kansas 36 consecutive times from 1969 through 2004. And they outscored the Jayhawks by an average of 53-8 from 1977 to 1992. Nebraska won 70-0 in 1986. That was as bad as it got. And the Cornhuskers used a back-up quarterback, Clete Blakeman, that day, because the starter, Steve Taylor, was injured.

That game was played in Lawrence, with red the stadium's dominant color.

Back-ups have always seemed to have big days against Kansas. Craig Johnson, a third-string I-back, rushed for 192 yards and two touchdowns and caught a 78-yard touchdown pass in a 63-21 victory in 1978.

That game also was in Lawrence, as was a 59-23 victory in 1991, in which freshman I-back Calvin Jones rushed for 294 yards and six touchdowns. Both are still Cornhusker records.

When Kansas defeated Nebraska 40-15 two years ago in Lawrence, to end its 36-game losing streak, Cornhusker fans couldn't have envisioned anything much worse. But 40-15 was mild by comparison.

"Obviously, there are no words to explain this loss," Cornhusker coach Bill Callahan said.

Want a comparison? Doc Sadler's basketball team lost 92-39 in Lawrence last season.

Had the Jayhawks football team continued to score in the second half as it did in the first, it would have eclipsed that. The score was 48-24 at the intermission. And 69-31 at the end of

three quarters.

Nebraska used to post such numbers. Its opponents did not.

The loss was the Cornhuskers' fifth in a row, something that hasn't happened since 1958. They lost seven in a row in 1957, on the way to a 1-9 record in Bill Jennings' first season as coach.

Despite a fourth consecutive loss the previous week at Texas, there was a glimmer of hope. Nebraska led the Longhorns at one point 17-3 and, despite a fourth-quarter defensive collapse, battled to the end, losing 28-25.

It appeared the Cornhuskers had reached rock bottom and were on their way up.

That appearance held for a little over 4 minutes against Kansas. Nebraska's defense forced the Jayhawks to go three-and-punt on their first possession. Then Joe Ganz, who stepped in for Sam Keller, turned good field position into a 10-play, 46-yard touchdown drive, converting on three third-down situations.

On the third, he dived into the end zone from 3 yards out. It seemed like old times.

But Kansas responded with a touchdown, covering 68 yards in seven plays. Nebraska's defense couldn't support the offense, no surprise considering it went into the game ranked No. 107 nationally.

The Jayhawks would score on their next nine possessions as well, before being forced to attempt a 51-yard field goal with 13:03 remaining in the game. It failed.

Nebraska wide receiver Maurice Purify refused to blame the defense. "We need to go out and do what we do," he said. "Worrying about the defense is not our job. We can't do everybody else's job.

We're going to do ours. We need to go out here and put points on the board. And if it's enough, it's enough."

It wasn't nearly enough in this game.

With each loss, the likelihood that Callahan's time at Nebraska is limited. When he was named interim athletic director, Osborne said he would complete his evaluation of Callahan and staff at season's end. And with the chances of a bowl game increasingly remote, the end is probably less than a month away.

"We're trying to do everything we can. There are no other options," Callahan said. "We're just going to keep coaching, working, trying to help these players through this. It's much tougher on the players."

That's true. But 76-39 was plenty tough on the fans who made the trip to Lawrence, too, even though they could take solace in the lone figure, waiting for the team to file into the locker room afterward. ■



Bill Callahan said, "there are no words to explain this loss."

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for nearly 30 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

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